

INTRODUCED: April 26, 2021

AN ORDINANCE No. 2021-120

To approve the Work Plan and Budget for the fiscal year ending Jun. 30, 2022, for the provision of services in the Downtown Richmond Special Service and Assessment Districts.

Patrons – President Newbille and Vice President Robertson

Approved as to form and legality  
by the City Attorney

**A TRUE COPY:**  
**TESTE:**  
*Carolin D. Reed*  
**City Clerk**

PUBLIC HEARING: MAY 24 2021 AT 6 P.M.

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That the Work Plan and Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, for the provision of services in the Downtown Richmond Special Service and Assessment Districts and their overlay districts, as attached to this ordinance, are hereby approved.

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

AYES: 8 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: \_\_\_\_\_

ADOPTED: MAY 24 2021 REJECTED: \_\_\_\_\_ STRICKEN: \_\_\_\_\_



# Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

## Office of the Council Chief of Staff

### Council Ordinance/Resolution Request

**TO** Haskell C. Brown, III, Interim Richmond City Attorney  
Richmond Office of the City Attorney

**THROUGH** Joyce L. Davis, Council Chief of Staff

**FROM** William E. Echelberger, Jr, Council Budget Analyst

**COPY** Cynthia Newbille, 7<sup>th</sup> District Council member  
Tabrica Rentz, Acting Deputy City Attorney  
Sam Patterson, 7<sup>th</sup> District Liaison

**DATE** April 16, 2021

**PAGE/s** 1 of 2

**TITLE:** **Approval of Annual Budget and Work Plan FY 21-22 for services in the Downtown Richmond Special Service and Assessment Districts**

This is a request for the drafting of an  **Ordinance**  **Resolution**

**REQUESTING COUNCILMEMBER/PATRON**

Council member Cynthia Newbille

**SUGGESTED STANDING COMMITTEE**

Finance Committee

**ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION SUMMARY**

Ordinance to approve the Work Plan and Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 for the provision of services in the Downtown Richmond Special Service and Assessment Districts.

**BACKGROUND**

The patron requests an ordinance to approve the Work Plan and Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, for the provision of services in the Downtown Richmond Special Service and Assessment Districts. Attached is the FY 22 budget and Work Plan.

Venture Richmond is under contract with the City to manage the Downtown Special Assessment Districts and submits an annual Work Plan and Budget to City Council. Upon approval of this plan, by ordinance, Venture Richmond will implement programs for the Service Districts, through June 30, 2022. Venture Richmond provides management of the Clean and Safe Program, provides marketing services; produces various downtown events; is the property manager for the Riverfront Overlay District; and provides a variety of services including the canal cruises.

**Fiscal Impact**

The City provides a contribution to the Venture Richmond program annually. It is used to pay for the Clean & Safe program managed by Venture Richmond. The City originally

RECEIVED  
By Desiney Lowery at 8:42 am, Apr 19, 2021

agreed to outsource the Downtown sidewalk cleaning program to Richmond Renaissance (now Venture Richmond) as part of 50/50 partnership between the City and Downtown property owners/businesses who agreed to a Special Service District Tax Rate of \$0.05/\$100. The City has also previously provided funding for the support for the riverfront, festivals and events, marketing and promotion; for a total city contribution of \$900,000.

The Mayor's proposed FY 22 budget includes \$900,000 in Non-Departmental funds for Venture Richmond. In FY22 Venture Richmond also will receive special funds from the General District Assessment, the Riverfront Assessment, and earned income. The Downtown Special Service District programs are funded by property owners in the General District and the Riverfront Overlay District.

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Fiscal Impact Yes  No

Budget Amendment Required Yes  No

Estimated Cost or Revenue Impact

Funding is expected to be included in the FY 22 proposed and adopted budgets.

Attachment/s Yes  No

Venture Richmond - Service Districts  
 Consolidated Budget  
 Budget FY 2021-2022  
 as of 3/30/2021

FY 21-22 Budget					
	Consolidated Service District Total	General District	Riverfront	Shoetoe Slip	Broad/Grace
<b>Projected Income (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)</b>					
Interest Income - Service Districts	357	357			
Prior Years Fund Balance Carried Forward	54,761		5,000	24,299	25,462
Assessed Funds (General District)	1,704,500	1,704,500			
Assessed Funds (City account balance/carryover)	-	-			
City Share -Clean & Safe & Riverfront & Manchester	900,000	700,000	200,000		
Assessed Funds (Riverfront)	449,484		448,484		
Contributions	-				
Riverfront-Other Revenue (earned and General District)	139,359		139,359		
<b>Projected Total Income - FY 2021-2022</b>	<b>3,248,461</b>	<b>2,404,857</b>	<b>793,843</b>	<b>24,299</b>	<b>25,462</b>
<b>TOTAL Income</b>	<b>3,248,461</b>	<b>2,404,857</b>	<b>793,843</b>	<b>24,299</b>	<b>25,462</b>
<b>Expenses (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)</b>					
Audit	5,000	5,000			
Clean & Safe Landscaping & Beautification	145,552	145,552			
Clean & Safe Contract Services	939,214	939,214			
Depreciation - Clean & Safe Equipment	46,992	46,992			
Insurance	6,991	6,991			
Bank Fees	200	200			
Downtown Marketing	250,750	250,750			
Legal	6,000	6,000			
Neighborhood Programs	49,781				
Downtown New Initiatives (Econ. Dev., Riverfront, etc.)	120,000	120,000		24,299	25,462
Placemaking	16,549	16,549			
Program Management	327,263	327,263			
General Administration Allocation	130,346	130,346			
GD support to Richmond Folk Festival	200,000	200,000			
GD support to Friday Cheers	50,000	50,000			
GD support to 2nd Street Festival	75,000	75,000			
GD support of Riverfront	85,000	85,000			
Riverfront (management, maintenance, operations, etc.)	886,748		886,748		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,341,366</b>	<b>2,404,857</b>	<b>886,748</b>	<b>24,299</b>	<b>25,462</b>
<b>NET INCOME - June 30, 2022</b>	<b>(92,905)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(92,905)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Notes to FY 2021-2022 budget  
 • Use of fund balance from Shoetoe Slip Consumer District & Broad/Grace Consumer District  
 -- Clean & Safe equipment is purchased using funding from previous tax years; amortized over 4 years

# Venture Richmond Special Assessment District Management

## Work Plan and Budget FY 2021-2022

Venture Richmond represents the merger of Richmond Renaissance, River District Alliance, Richmond Riverfront Corporation and City Celebrations. Venture Richmond is under contract with the City of Richmond to manage the Downtown Special Service and Assessment Districts. It is also under contract to manage, operate and maintain the Downtown Riverfront which includes the Canal Walk and Canal Cruise operations, Brown's Island and the Belle Isle parking lot.

### PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Service District programs were established in 1990 and are supported by the City of Richmond Administration, City Council and the Downtown business community. The FY 2021-2022 Work Plan and Budget continues to support the recommendations from a comprehensive evaluation of the Service District programs in 2006. The evaluation included: a VCU Metro Poll Telephone Survey of residents in the region to determine the community perceptions of Downtown Richmond; an online opinion survey for Downtown property owners, residents and businesses who pay the Special Assessment; and focus group discussions with the Downtown neighborhood organizations and Venture Richmond committees. There is strong support for the Service District programs, in fact, 82% of the taxpayers, who filled out the online survey, believed we should continue to provide enhanced services, such as Clean & Safe and marketing, for Downtown.

In 2020, Venture Richmond hired VCU's Center for Urban and Regional Analysis to conduct an economic impact study of Venture Richmond and its programs, which included quantitative and qualitative research. Focus group discussions with Downtown stakeholders showed strong support for Venture Richmond's programs and the impact they have on the community. The total economic impact of Venture Richmond operations and event attendee spending is \$57.7 million.

Venture Richmond also completed a research study with the International Downtown Association (IDA) on "The Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities" in 2020. The study quantifies the value of Downtowns across 150 metrics under five core value principles with a focus on how downtowns contribute to the city and region. From 2017 to 2020, IDA has analyzed a total of 37 downtowns and center cities across the country.

## CLEAN & SAFE

The Downtown Special Assessment District continues to enjoy remarkable success, helping to transform a historic downtown into a thriving, vibrant area which is emerging as a key tax base driver for the City.

In accordance with the applicable Ordinance that formed the basis of the public-private partnership and imposed a \$.05/100 special assessment on District property owners for enhanced services. The City of Richmond's share of this public-private partnership is \$700,000 annually for the outsourcing of Downtown sidewalk cleaning. Private sector support from the property owners via the special assessment is approximately \$2.2 million and greatly exceeds the "City share" and continues to escalate.

The **goals** of the Downtown Clean and Safe Program include the following:

- **Enhance the cleanliness of Downtown** - Venture Richmond has contracted with minority owned Community Business Group to provide sidewalk cleaning services, weeding, leaf collection, steam cleaning homeless waste spots and other cleanliness related services in the districts. The Clean and Safe team provides an **enhanced sense of safety** on the streets and operates seven days a week. Funds (\$700,000) previously used by the City to provide sidewalk cleaning services Downtown are transferred and outsourced to Venture Richmond to help fund part of this program.
- **Beautify Downtown** - Venture Richmond will continue to work with the City of Richmond to beautify the Downtown district. This fills a void that some active civic associations would otherwise provide, but it is not provided by the City on a consistent basis. Venture Richmond oversees and maintains the Broad St planters, the Grace Street Beautification program, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Street Gateways and 124 hanging baskets along Broad St. and in Shockoe Slip.
- **Beautification Program** developed in partnership with Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Maymont and the City. Venture Richmond contracts to provide the ongoing watering and maintenance for these beautification projects. Additional beautification projects overseen, funded and maintained by Venture Richmond include the Broad St. mo-hawk medians, the 12<sup>th</sup> and Canal St. median and 14<sup>th</sup> and Dock St. median.
- **Enhance the feeling of safety** Downtown by providing enhanced cleaning, additional eyes and cars on the street, beautification services that exceeded normal City standards, and handling the difficult problem areas that require constant attention.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAMS

To work with the Shockoe Slip and the Broad/Grace Consumer Districts to support specific programs that benefit those neighborhoods, such as capital improvement and beautification projects, neighborhood marketing initiatives, and events.

*It should be noted that no City funds are used for these programs. These consumer districts had an extra tax assessment in the past, and the remaining balance of those funds is being used for these programs.*

## DOWNTOWN MARKETING

In addition to our ongoing marketing and promotional efforts for Downtown and the Riverfront Canal Cruises, Venture Richmond will continue to lead the RVA Branding initiative, which has helped unify the region. We have distributed hundreds of thousands of RVA bumper stickers to residents to enhance pride in Downtown and the City.

We are bringing more attention to the small businesses, as well as the residential and commercial development boom that is underway downtown, through highly creative marketing strategies. We continue to expand our website, redesigned in 2019, that promotes Downtown and includes an interactive map highlighting downtown restaurants and shops, historic sites and attractions. We recently launched a “Faces of Downtown” campaign in print, TV and social media platforms. The goal of the program is to remind the region of the faces of our small businesses who have been hurt by the pandemic and need support from the region.

## DOWNTOWN EVENTS

To support major community festivals produced by Venture Richmond, such as the Richmond Folk Festival, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Festival, and Friday Cheers. We also produce Dominion Energy Riverrock in partnership with the Sports Backers.

## DOWNTOWN INITIATIVES

To provide funding for new Venture Richmond Downtown initiatives that support enhanced services, economic development, riverfront improvements, placemaking or other programs aligned with our strategic plan. We are also working with the City and others on how to leverage Venture Richmond’s time and talents to further support the economic development of Downtown.

## RIVERFRONT DISTRICT

To support Riverfront programs, property management and improvements. Venture Richmond is under contract with the City to manage and maintain city-owned Canal

Walk, Brown's Island and the Belle Isle parking lot. In addition to the Riverfront Overlay District's assessed funds, the City provides \$200,000 for their share of the operating costs and the General District supports the Riverfront with \$85,000.

To fund the development and implementation of programs and property management for Richmond's Riverfront Overlay Districts. The annual work plan for this area includes:

- Maintain Tredegar Green as a public open space
- Continue to enhance the level of maintenance, landscaping, and improvements of the Canal Walk corridor, Brown's Island, Bayscape Area – Haxall Headgate Park, Tredegar Green and all of the leased areas;
- Facilitate interest in Richmond Riverfront development opportunities and provide assistance to developers and tenants;
- Coordinate private covenant and Riverfront design guideline compliance and Architectural Review Committee reviews of riverfront projects;
- Coordinate continuous improvements along the canal and riverfront area;
- Maintain and enhance the "botanical makeover" of the Canal Walk from Reynold's east towards the Floodwall, working in partnership with Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and corporate volunteers.
- Continue site management role and active leasing of Brown's Island and Turning Basin event venues.
- Secure renewal or replacement of all business package, workers compensation, marine liability and general liability insurance policies.
- Annual upkeep of the historic interpretations
- Operate and market the Riverfront Canal Cruises, on a limited basis, to charts during the pandemic in 2021.
- Implement the Brown's Island Improvement Plan to assist the City of Richmond in implementing recommendations from the 2012 Richmond Riverfront Plan that will make Brown's Island a safer and more effective event venue and a more attractive and accessible public park

As a condition to the continuation of the Agreement for the Provision of Services in the Downtown Richmond Special Service and Assessment Districts dated December 31, 1996, as modified, amended and assigned (the "Services Agreement") and to secure Venture Richmond's performance under the Services Agreement, Venture Richmond granted to the City (as defined in the Services Agreement) a lien on substantially all of the assets of Venture Richmond.