



Legislation Text

File #: ORD. 2020-236, **Version:** 1

To approve the action of the City Planning Commission adopting “Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth” as the Master Plan of the City of Richmond, and to repeal Ord. No. 2000-371-2001-11, adopted Jan. 8, 2001, and all amendments thereto, with the exception of the Riverfront Plan as contained in Ord. No. 2012-202-190, adopted Nov. 26, 2012, the VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Plan as contained in Ord. No. 2016-002, adopted Feb. 8, 2016, the Pulse Corridor Plan as contained in Ord. No. 2017-127, adopted Jul. 24, 2017, the Riverfront Plan as contained in Ord. No. 2017-148, adopted Sept. 25, 2017, the Public Art Master Plan as contained in Ord. No. 2018-205, adopted Sept. 24, 2018, and the James River Park Systems Master Plan as contained in Ord. No. 2019-337, adopted Jan. 27, 2020.

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission last adopted a new Master Plan for the City of Richmond on November 6, 2000, which Master Plan the City Council approved by Ordinance No. 2000-371-2001-11, adopted January 8, 2001, in accordance with section 17.06 of the Charter of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended; and

WHEREAS, to facilitate the City Planning Commission’s performance of its duties under sections 17.04 through 17.06 of the Charter of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, the City’s Department of Planning and Development Review presented to the City Planning Commission a new Master Plan entitled “Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth” and dated September 29, 2020, to replace the Master Plan adopted on November 6, 2000; and

WHEREAS, in its consideration of the proposed new Master Plan, the City Planning Commission received comments resulting from numerous meetings with individual citizens, civic groups, and City departments that would be affected by the proposed new Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Development Review contacted 8,573 attendees, received 4,990 survey responses, hosted 111 “Richmond 300” meetings, attended 229 community and stakeholder meetings, reviewed over 2,000 comments, and received over 90 letters and electronic mail messages over the course of three years to create the new Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of section 17.06 of the Charter of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, the City Planning Commission held public hearings on September 21, 2020, and October 5, 2020, for the purposes of receiving additional public comments relative to the proposed new Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, following its second public hearing on the proposed new Master Plan, the City Planning Commission adopted a resolution, entitled “Resolution of the City of Richmond Planning Commission, Adopting Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth as the Master Plan of the City of Richmond” and dated October 5, 2020, a copy of which is attached to this ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the new Master Plan as adopted by the City Planning Commission on October 5, 2020, encompasses a plan for guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the city and its environs that will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, comfort, prosperity, and general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development, as provided in section 17.04 of the Charter of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended; and

WHEREAS, it is the consensus of the Council that it is in the best interest of the City of Richmond that the Council, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, consent to and approve the new Master Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That the new Master Plan as adopted by the City Planning Commission at its hearing on October 5, 2020, entitled “Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth” and dated September 29, 2020, a copy of which is attached to and made a part of this ordinance, be and is hereby approved and from the effective date of this ordinance shall be the Master Plan for the City of Richmond.

§ 2. That Ordinance No. 2012-202-190, adopted November 26, 2012, which approved the Riverfront Plan, Ordinance No. 2016-002, adopted February 8, 2016, which approved the VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Plan, Ordinance No. 2017-127, adopted July 24, 2017, which approved the Pulse Corridor Plan, Ordinance No. 2017-148, adopted September 25, 2017, which approved the Riverfront Plan, Ordinance No. 2018-205, adopted September 24, 2018, which approved the Public Art Master Plan, and Ordinance No. 2019-337, adopted January 27, 2020, which approved the James River Park Systems Master Plan, all of which are hereinafter referred to collectively as the “Amendments,” shall remain in effect and be deemed part of the Master Plan approved by section 1 of this ordinance, provided, however, that all references to and illustrations of “future land use map” and “future land use categories” in the Amendments shall be deemed to refer to, and shall be deemed to be replaced by, the future land use map and future land use categories of the Master Plan approved by section 1 of this ordinance.

§ 3. That Ordinance No. 2000-371-2001-11, adopted January 8, 2001, and all amendments thereto, with the exception of the Amendments, shall be and are hereby repealed.

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

O & R Request

DATE: October 12, 2020 **EDITION:** 1

TO: The Honorable Members of City Council

THROUGH: The Honorable Levar M. Stoney, Mayor

THROUGH: Lenora G. Reid, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

THROUGH: Sharon L. Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Economic Development and Planning

FROM: Mark A. Olinger, Director, Dept. of Planning and Development Review

RE: Request to adopt Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth as the official Master plan for City of Richmond.

ORD. OR RES. No.

PURPOSE: To approve the action of the City Planning Commission of October 5, 2020, adopting by resolution the Master Plan for the City of Richmond.

REASON: The City Planning Commission has, pursuant to the provisions of Section 17.06 of the City Charter, approved a resolution adopting a new Master Plan, replacing the Master Plan adopted in 2001. The Commission conducted a public hearing on September 21, 2020, and the resolution approving the plan, following an additional opportunity for public

comment, was adopted on October 5, 2020. The Charter provides that action must be taken by the Commission to adopt the Master Plan and must be approved by Council to become effective.

RECOMMENDATION: The Master Plan provides revised long-range policy direction for the physical development of the City of Richmond. The City Planning Commission following numerous community meetings and work session has adopted the new Master Plan. Approval is recommended.

BACKGROUND: The City Planning Commission passed City Planning Commission Resolution 2016-70 and Resolution 2017-79 to establish the 21-member Advisory Council to 1) assist in shaping and reviewing the content of the New Master Plan; 2) help build awareness of the Master Plan; and 3) encourage community participation in the New Master Plan update process.

Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth is the first comprehensive revision to the City Master Plan since 2000. The *Richmond 300* Advisory Council oversaw a robust public engagement process that occurred between September 2018 and September 2020 and included three rounds of public engagement and a series of 15 Working Group meetings in March through July 2019. Through the plan development process, the Department of Planning & Development Review (PDR) reached 8,573 attendees, received 4,990 survey responses, hosted 111 Richmond 300 meetings, attended 229 community and stakeholder meetings, reviewed over 2,000 comments, and received over 90 letters and emails. PDR staff attended numerous City Planning Commission meetings to provide updates on the planning process and also provided updates at several meetings of the City Council's Organizational Development Standing Committee. PDR staff developed the content in *Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* with extensive community input.

Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth provides a place-based integrated approach to guide investment and policy for a growing city. The document has seven chapters. Chapters 1 through 6 outline one vision for 2037, 3 guiding maps, 5 topic visions, 17 goals, 70 objectives, and over 400 strategies. Chapter 7 outlines an implementation strategy focused on benchmarking metrics, implementing 6 Big Moves, and reporting. The sheer breadth and length of any comprehensive plan can make it difficult to execute; therefore *Richmond 300* outlines 6 Big Moves to deliberately advance over the next 5 years. Because these moves are wide-reaching, there are several strategies throughout *Richmond 300* that relate to each Big Move. As the City advances each of the Big Moves over the next 5 years, Richmond will be well on its way to realize its 20-year vision.

On September 16, 2020, the Richmond 300 Advisory Council recommended by a 19-0-2 vote (2 members were absent) that the City Planning Commission adopt *Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* as the new City-wide Master Plan.

In both written and public comments to *Richmond 300* a number of issues were raised that identified items that should be addressed as the *Richmond 300* moves to adoption. In order to identify them as part of the Ordinance package, staff has included them here, **and** responded to the comment with specific page references where applicable:

Comment: If *Richmond 300* is passed, my zoning district will change.

Response: After *Richmond 300* is passed, all zoning districts will remain the same. Zoning districts change with a zoning

amendment, which must be adopted by City Council. Zoning changes are made with extensive community engagement. A “Big Move” identified in *Richmond 300* is to re-write the Zoning Ordinance (pp. 184-186). The re-write of the Zoning Ordinance is a three- to five-year process that will include extensive community engagement.

Comment: Neighborhood Mixed-Use is a not a residential category.

Response: The Neighborhood Mixed-Use future land use category is applied to areas that are predominantly residential. “Existing or new highly-walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses.” (p. 56)

Comment: If my neighborhood is labeled “XX,” then tomorrow my neighborhood will have a lot of the secondary uses described in the Future Land Use description.

Response: The exact location of where uses happen will be determined with zoning. When the rezoning occurs, for all secondary uses listed in the various future land use categories, the secondary uses will likely either A) be allowed by-right in some areas, B) be allowed only with a conditional use permit in some areas OR C) be allowed only with a Special Use Permit (SUP). For all of the Future Land Use Categories, NONE of them are implemented with just ONE zoning district. For instance, when Scott’s Addition was re-zoned in 2017, it became three different zoning districts (not just one) in order to meet the intent of the Industrial Mixed-Use category and the unique circumstances of that area.

Comment: The Future Land Use Category for my neighborhood includes an intensity description with a range of building heights - that means all the future buildings in my neighborhood will be the maximum height listed in the description.

Response: No, the range of intensity is intended to describe the range of heights that may be found in an area. All buildings throughout an entire Future Land Use Category will not all be uniformly the maximum height allowed. Rather, the Future Land Use Category describes the range of heights generally found in the area, just as we find throughout the city today. The exact location of where taller buildings may be allowed in the future will be determined through the rezoning process, which will be developed with extensive community participation.

Comment: If *Richmond 300* is passed, a very tall building or inappropriate use will appear in my neighborhood tomorrow.

Response: No, any proposed project that does not meet the current zoning will need to go through the SUP process. If an SUP comes along, the applicant will have to work with staff and the community to make sure their project aligns with the intentions of *Richmond 300* (the Future Land Use Map, the Nodes Map, the Future Connections Map, and strategies in the plan).

Comment: If *Richmond 300* is passed, Richmond’s historic neighborhoods will be at risk for demolition.

Response: *Richmond 300* celebrates Richmond’s authenticity and the Plan upholds the preservation and enhancement of historic neighborhoods. The Plan includes many recommendations related to preserving and enhancing the authentic character of Richmond’s historic neighborhoods:

- Obj. 1.1.c Evaluate zoning districts in historical areas that were developed prior to the advent of zoning regulations to ensure new construction similar in form to the historical context is allowed. (p. 84)

- Goal 3: Historic Preservation - Support growth that preserves the historical urban fabric and enhances understanding of Richmond's multi-faceted past. (p. 91)
- Obj. 3.1: Preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures, neighborhoods, cemeteries, and landscapes that contribute to Richmond's authenticity. (p. 93)
- Obj. 3.2 Reduce the demolition of historical buildings. (p. 95)
- Goal 4: Urban Design: Establish a distinctive city comprising architecturally significant buildings connected by a network of walkable urban streets and open spaces to support an engaging built environment. (p. 96)
- Obj. 4.1.a Develop zoning districts that support protect and enhance neighborhood character, especially in areas that are not protected by City Old & Historic Districts. (p. 100)
- Big Move: Re-write the Zoning Ordinance - Direct growth to appropriate areas while maintaining existing neighborhoods as well as creating new authentic neighborhoods adjacent to enhanced transit. (p. 184)

Beauty: A new Zoning Ordinance should include measures to preserve the authentic character of Richmond's older neighborhoods and to create new neighborhoods with design elements that create a distinctive city. These measures could include form-based elements such as massing and fenestration requirements, as well as open space and yard requirements to create a walkable, engaging built environment. (p. 185)

- High-Quality Places: Obj. 1.1 calls for rezoning the city in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan in order to establish a city of complete neighborhoods that have access to Nodes connected by major corridors in a gridded street network. Obj. 4.3 calls for reviewing the Zoning Ordinance to change open space requirements and definitions. Obj. 4.1 calls for various recommendations to create and preserve high-quality, distinctive, and well-designed neighborhoods and Nodes throughout the city. (p. 185)

Comment: Once *Richmond 300* is adopted everything in the Plan will be implemented immediately and everything in the City will change.

Response: No, *Richmond 300* is a long-range plan that provides guidance for how the City should manage growth over the next 20 years. The long-range vision will take years to implement. Chapter 7: Implementation of *Richmond 300* includes 6 Big Moves for the City to further over the next five years. After *Richmond 300* is adopted by the City Planning Commission and City Council, the City will commence to implement strategies outlined in the Plan by allocating staff resources and City budget accordingly. Local businesses, the development community, non-profits, and the public may also use *Richmond 300* to make decisions on how and where they want to grow, invest, live, play, and work in Richmond.

Comment: Once *Richmond 300* is adopted there will be no more public engagement around planning, development, and growth management issues.

Response: This is simply untrue. PDR believes active public engagement in shaping and guiding development and land use decisions is essential in realizing the vision outlined in *Richmond 300*. Goal 5 of the plan outlines many strategies related to expanding community engagement in Richmond. Furthermore, there are many laws related to public notice that PDR must follow.

Comment: My property is shown as “under-developed” in Figure 9. This means that the City is out to get my land.

Response: Figure 9 on p. 16 titled “Vacant Buildings and Vacant & Under-Developed Land” illustrates the case that the city can already absorb a large portion of future, expected population growth without drastic changes to existing neighborhood character, whether through new development on vacant parcels, or redevelopment of vacant buildings or “under-utilized” parcels in certain circumstances. The identification of under-utilized parcels, where the ratio of improved value to land value is less than 2.0 (i.e., a parcel with a land value of \$50,000 and an improved value of less than \$100,00) is for reference purposes only. There are no specific strategies or policies in the plan that tie directly to these identified parcels, which in the vast majority of cases are privately-owned. Typically, these identified parcels are very large with a small amount of building footprint on them, or are in areas with high land values that would be appropriate for more dense development (such as Downtown). The *Richmond 300* plan does not advocate for using eminent domain and there is no such connection between that and the identified “under-developed” parcels in Figure 9. The City of Richmond is of course able to purchase land from a willing seller at an agreed upon price to further specific goals, such as the creation of new public open space, but that would be done through a traditional property transfer.

Comment: The Plan shows a bridge/interchange on the Future Connections Maps, this means that a new infrastructure will be built, and the public will have no say in the matter.

Response: There are several new bridges/interchanges and improvements to bridges/interchanges proposed in *Richmond 300*. These are all long-range projects that will be developed in coordination with VDOT (where applicable), the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization, adjacent localities (where applicable), and the community-at-large. Many of these proposed connection improvements will require further study and planning.

FISCAL IMPACT / COST: No cost is incurred by adoption of the plan. However, the Plan recommends a variety of City expenditures over the next two decades to implement the vision and goals of the Plan.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: None

BUDGET AMENDMENT NECESSARY: No

REVENUE TO CITY: No revenue is realized by the adoption of the Plan. However, as the Plan is implemented over the next several years, it is expected that the City will experience economic growth leading to additional tax base and revenues.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon adoption

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: November 9, 2020

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: December 16, 2020

REQUESTED AGENDA: Consent

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Land Use, Housing, and Transportation Committee

CONSIDERATION BY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES:

City Planning Commission, October 5, 2020

Richmond 300 Advisory Council (Sub-Committee of Planning Commission): September 16, 2020

AFFECTED AGENCIES: All City agencies participated in the development of the Master Plan and may ultimately participate in, or be impacted by its implementation

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.: None.

REQUIRED CHANGES TO WORK PROGRAM(S): The work program for the Department of Planning and Development Review will focus on the implementation of *Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth*.

ATTACHMENTS: Draft Ordinance
City Planning Commission Resolution
Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth Executive Summary
Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth Master Plan

STAFF: Mark A. Olinger, Director, Department of Planning and Development Review
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Key Issues:

Retain on Consent Agenda

Move to Regular Agenda

Refer Back to Committee

Remove from Council Agenda

Strike

Withdrawn

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