

Proposed Amendments to Richmond Downtown Plan (October 2008)

Proposed amendments adopted by the City Planning Commission on May 4, 2009

Page 3.18, line 10 (insert underlined text)

“Where property lies within a designated 100-year floodplain, the height recommendations (i.e. number of stories) for the Character Area should be calculated from the top of the floodplain, not from the actual ground level. All other features associated with a Character Area are applicable as described to properties within a floodplain.”

Page 3.19, image

[Insert a map image that clearly delineates the boundaries of each Character Area, as depicted on Attachment A.]

Page 3.34, right column, line 27 (strike denoted text)

“According to Claritas, only thirty percent of Downtown Richmond’s residents are in households of more than 1 or 2 people, and more than thirty-eight percent of the population is not currently in the labor force, ~~whether due to retirement or unemployment.~~”

Page 3.36, right column, line 29 (insert underlined text)

“One of the first steps towards social and economic advancement is the continued improvement of the Richmond public school system, which will allow students of all backgrounds to have equal access to quality education.”

Page 4.17, left column, line 37 [and other sections of the document where duplicate language exists] (strike denoted text and insert underlined text)

~~“Given the importance of the street grid to Richmond’s urban environment, the grid (including alleys) should be preserved, and wherever possible, reinstated, as the City develops further. Given the importance of the street grid to Richmond’s urban environment, every effort should be made to preserve the grid, including alleys, as the City develops further. Closure or sale of the City’s streets and alleys should only be allowed if the building type requires such.”~~

Page 4.21, right column, line 24 (strike denoted text and insert underlined text)

“The City should offer ~~in-house design assistance~~ design review assistance to provide consistency in the overall improvements of facades Downtown.”

Page 4.23

[Insert the language and graphics related to J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, as depicted on Attachment B.]

Page 4.27, right column, line 1 (strike denoted text and insert underlined text)

~~“Concurrently, the Commonwealth of Virginia should be encouraged to designate an Architect of the Commonwealth. With these two positions, the City and State can continue to work together and expand communications to shape the successful future of “Virginia’s Downtown. The Commonwealth of Virginia has designated, and is encouraged to continue to designate, a liaison that is capable of providing architectural, historic preservation, and planning expertise pertaining to the Capitol Square Complex and state-owned properties within downtown.”~~

Page 4.45, right column, line 15 (insert underlined text)

“This would be accomplished through the control of building height and massing on a case-by-case basis according to the Character Area designation.”

Page 4.48, image

[Delete the two Illustrative Plan images (top left and top right of page) and delete the page’s title, “Possibilities for the Former Tarmac Property”, as depicted on Attachment C.]

Page 4.58, right column, line 35 (strike denoted text and insert underlined text)

“Improve stormwater management

~~The catastrophic flooding in Shockoe Bottom during Tropical Storm Gaston in 2004 has left many people wary of investing in “The Bottom.” It is essential that an effective stormwater management system be introduced to the area, to ensure that such devastation does not occur again. The City should continue to be vigilant in its plans to improve stormwater management in Shockoe by moving forward with additional utility upgrades and green technologies, but by also investigating opportunities to create natural environments for water infiltration. Such an opportunity could be the development of a park in the Shockoe Valley north of East Broad Street. The park could include areas to detain stormwater from the adjacent hillsides, while also providing an open space connection to nearby neighborhoods. The City’s recent investment in correcting the drainage issues should reinsure investors who were previously wary of rehabilitating buildings. New construction in the area will have to be carefully coordinated with the newly created FEMA maps. The catastrophic flooding during Tropical Storm Gaston in 2004 has left many people wary of investing in Shockoe Bottom. The revised FEMA maps, dated April 2, 2009, include Main Street Station and approximately 60 acres of property currently located behind (or upstream to the~~

north) of the floodwall in a new expanded flood plain. Inclusion of property within the new 100-year flood plain severely limits new development and re-development of existing buildings without innovative engineering solutions that provide appropriate building “floodproofing” protection and emergency access in accordance with City and Federal guidelines.

Recent projects by the City have improved the drainage and floodwall system for a specific sub-100 year storm event. The City should continue its efforts to improve the storm water management throughout Shockoe Bottom and in the upper watershed by encouraging innovative private and public solutions (coordinated with the City’s Department of Public Utilities) that complement the work already done by the City.”

Page 4.59, left column, line 15 (insert underlined text)

“The brick sidewalks that exist today should be restored, maintained, and where possible, widened. Existing concrete sidewalks should be replaced with brick, where possible and in conjunction with new private development. Street trees should be planted regularly along the edge of the sidewalk at no more than 30’ apart.”

Page 4.61, left column (insert underlined text and update the Character Map on page 3.19 to depict a “Civic Area” designation for the Lumpkin’s Jail site)

“As additional information is gathered regarding the extent of historic sites, including Lumpkin’s Jail and others associated with the slave trade, on and adjacent to the Main Street Station property, impacts of any proposed development on the historic site(s) should be carefully considered. Development that interprets the African American historical experience, such as a visitor center or viewing stations, is appropriate for the site.”

Page 4.61, left column (strike denoted text and insert underlined text; move entire section from Chapter 4 into Chapter 5, page 5.24)

“Restore Main Street Station as an inter-modal center

Main Street Station was built in 1901 as a grand terminal to welcome travelers into Downtown. The chateau-style station and generous train shed was once a bustling center of transportation and commerce. By 1975, however, the interstate system and automobile usage had eclipsed the railroad system, and the train station closed due to flood damage and lack of passengers.

In 2003, Main Street Station’s fortunes turned. The station was fully restored and re-opened to limited Amtrak service, serving two trains per day. Parts of the train shed are dedicated to cultural exhibitions; however, Main Street Station remains underutilized. The City should take advantage of this great asset by restoring its role as the center of the community.

The City is considering options City proposed plans for Main Street Station involve two different strategies for revitalizing the grand terminal and the surrounding properties. Both strategies involve introducing. There are opportunities for both transportation-related functions and other types of uses for the existing buildings and grounds, but any development plan for the property should include a new street through the two-block long train shed, thus in order to increasing-increase connectivity in the area and enhancing-enhance pedestrian access. It is important that the City fully explore the options for revitalizing the property while maintaining its eligibility for current and future transportation-related grant funding.

The first plan involves the least amount of infrastructure investment and serves the short-term needs of the community. This plan involves developing the existing train shed as a community recreation space. This space could be used for flexible, temporary events such as markets, indoor sports, and exhibitions or parts of the shed could be converted in more permanent use as a bowling alley, theatre, or museum.

A more long-term plan involves developing An important component of the future of Main Street Station is to consider it for as a multi-modal transportation hub for Downtown. A multi-modal transportation hub could include increased passenger rail service, commuter rail service, light rail or streetcar, buses, bus rapid transit (BRT), shuttles, taxis, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. This would provide a tremendous benefit to Downtown, as it does not currently have an integrated transportation center, thus preventing most residents and workers from using transit. Main Street Station is an excellent choice for such a transportation center, as the station is a grand entrance to the city, and its location provides direct access to the City Center and Downtown neighborhoods. The impact of any such use on the existing residential/commercial nature of the surrounding neighborhood should be carefully evaluated in consultation with representatives of the neighborhood prior to actively considering any such potential use.

A short-term strategy for such a transportation hub would be to center Downtown provide bus service, airport shuttles, taxi and limousine service on-at the train station. As urban transit matures, a streetcar could be integrated into the system, and ultimately, increased rail service could serve the station, making Main Street Station a local and regional transportation destination. If these proposals do not take hold, another interim option would be to lease the train shed space as a unique location for a large-format diverse range of local and national retailers.

The development of Main Street Station as a multi-modal hub does offer the opportunity to consider transit-oriented development (TOD) within the surrounding area. TOD allows for increased levels of density for commercial and residential uses within an area due to the anticipated use of transit and the reduced

reliance on automobiles. Increased levels of density beyond what is generally recommended in this plan for the area surrounding the train station should only be considered if Main Street Station is developed into a multi-modal transportation hub.”

Page 4.63, left column, line 28 (insert underlined text)

“As additional information is gathered regarding the extent of historic sites, including Lumpkin’s Jail and others associated with the slave trade, on and adjacent to the Main Street Station property, impacts of any proposed development on the historic site(s) should be carefully considered. Development that interprets the African American historical experience, such as a visitor center or viewing stations, is appropriate for the site.”

Page 4.64, right column, line 32 (insert underlined text)

“Traffic speeds can be lowered by better defining the streets with closely-spaced street trees, and by restoring the cobblestone streets, particularly those on Oliver Hill Way, Cary Street (across 14th Street east to 18th Street initially), 17th Street, Grace Street, Marshall Street, and 18th Street.”

Page 5.23, left column, line 31 (strike denoted text and insert underlined text; update the Figure 12 on page 5.22 with alternate route options, as depicted on Attachment D)

~~“Security issues should be addressed as part of the development of the route option along Governor Street, including considering an alternate route through the Capital Square Complex. As the Commonwealth’s plans for a new street through the Capitol Square Complex develop, this street, along with City streets adjacent to the Capitol Square Complex, should be considered as route options for a future streetcar line.”~~

Page 7.5, right column, line 19 (strike denoted text and insert underlined text)

~~“The Architect of the City would oversee all new construction and demolition within the City, in areas outside of Old & Historic Districts, in particular. The Architect of the City should possess expertise in historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and context sensitive design. The importance of quality design and planning is a common theme throughout the Downtown Plan. In order to ensure that future downtown development is of the highest quality, the City should consider the creation of a new position, an Architect of the City, and possibly a Downtown Design Center. Both ideas have been implemented in other cities, such as Norfolk, Charlottesville, and Chattanooga, Tennessee, with great success. Expertise in design and planning is necessary if the City wishes to assist and inform developers, property owners, and citizens of the Plan’s vision. Additionally, an Architect of the City would guide the design and quality of all City-owned projects setting the example for other downtown development.”~~

Continue to integrate J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College’s programs and campus into Downtown

J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (JSRCC) provides education to more than 5,000 students each year at its Downtown Campus, with more than 18,500 credit students annually attending the college at one of its three academic campuses. In addition to offering courses in business and liberal arts, the Downtown Campus houses the School of Nursing and Allied Health, School of Culinary Arts, Tourism and Hospitality, School of Mathematics and Science, Center for Health Sciences, Center for Teacher Education, Urban Teachers Institute, and the Middle College.

The Downtown Campus is housed in a high-rise structure at 7th and Jackson Streets, having moved in the fall of 1981 from leased facilities in the 100 block of East Grace Street. In 1995, a major addition to this facility was completed, adding 84,000 square feet to the existing 200,000 square foot structure. A 400-space parking deck opened on the campus in 2005.

JSRCC continues to forge relationships in the community through outreach into the business community, other higher education institutions, and the public schools. For example, more than 700 employers throughout the region look to JSRCC (and the Community College Workforce Alliance) for skill training for their employees that provides a trained workforce and helps their companies succeed. JSRCC also has a strong relationship with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), with more JSRCC students transferring to VCU than from any other institution in the Commonwealth.



Physical and programmatic improvements should continue to be pursued to better integrate JSRCC’s Downtown Campus with the surrounding area and beyond.

JSRCC has as one of its strategic priorities to “raise the educational aspirations of the residents of the City of Richmond,” so plans continue to expand access to the residents of the City. Unfortunately, the campus is landlocked and the college must identify ways to meet expansion needs while enhancing the collegiate image of the current facilities. JSRCC, the Commonwealth and the City should explore options to beautify the existing building and grounds. In addition, the college seeks to diversify its offerings, by adding active uses that engage students and invite the surrounding community onto campus. Expansion of the campus, either within the area or in other parts of Downtown should also be considered. Collaboration during the initial planning and design phase will augment pending development and assure the integrity of the area’s urban fabric.



JSRCC should pursue opportunities to partner with nearby property owners on open-space initiatives

Collaborate with the City of Richmond on streetscape improvements along 7th and 8th Streets to connect the campus with Broad Street

Develop complementary non-academic uses at ground floor, such as shops or other active uses that engage students and add vibrancy to the area