



City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Special Scheduled City Commission Meeting

(in person)

600 Morton Street

Richmond, Texas 77469

Monday, June 24, 2024 at 4:30 P.M.

And

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2240869784?omn=88380099880>

Meeting ID: 224 086 9784

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,2240869784# US (Houston)

Dial by your location

- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 224 086 9784

Mayor Rebecca K. Haas

Commissioner Terry Gaul

Commissioner Barry Beard

Commissioner Carl Drozd

Commissioner Alex BeMent

AGENDA

- A1. Call to Order, Quorum Determined and Meeting Declared Open.
- A2. Public comments (Public comment is limited to a maximum of 3 minutes per item. No Deliberations with the Commission. Time may not be given to another speaker.)
- A3. Review and consider the second of two readings of Resolution No. 484-2024, approving the City Hall project and authorizing the expenditure of funds by the DCR for the for the City Hall Project.
- A4. Review and consider taking action on Resolution No. 484-2024, approving the City

Any item on this posted agenda may be discussed in Executive Session provided it is within one of the permitted categories under Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.

City Commission Meeting Agenda

June 24, 2024

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Hall project and authorizing the expenditure of funds by the DCR for the for the City Hall Project.

- A5. Review and consider taking action on Ordinance No. 2024-08, budget amendment for FY 2024.
- A6. Review and discuss proposed rate model changes within the Utility Master Plan.
- A7. Review and discuss the Draft of the Richmond Old Town Plan and Implementation Summary.
- A8. Adjournment.

If, during the course of the meeting covered by this Agenda, the Commission shall determine that an executive session of the Commission, should be held or is required in relation to any item included in this Agenda, then such executive session, as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, will be held by the Board at the date, hour, and place given in this Agenda concerning any and all subjects and for any and all purposes permitted by Sections 551.071-551.090 of the Texas Government Code, including, but not limited to, Section 551.071 – for purpose of consultation with attorney, on any or all subjects or matters authorized by law.

NOTICE OF ASSISTANCE AT THE PUBLIC MEETING

The City of Richmond City Commission meetings are available to all persons regardless of disability. This facility is wheelchair accessible and accessible parking spaces are available. Requests for accommodations, should you require special assistance, must be made 48 hours prior to this meeting. Braille is not available. Please contact the City Secretary's office at (281) 342-5456 ex. 505 for needed accommodations.

If you have any questions, please let me know.
Terri Vela

Any item on this posted agenda may be discussed in Executive Session provided it is within one of the permitted categories under Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.



City of Richmond

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- A1. Call to Order, Quorum Determined, Meeting Declared Open



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- A2. Public comments (Public comment is limited to a maximum of 3 minutes per item. No Deliberations with the Commission. Time may not be given to another speaker.)



City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Special Scheduled City Commission Meeting

600 Morton Street

Richmond, Texas 77469

Monday, June 24, 2024 at 4:30 P.M.

- A3. Review and consider the second of two readings of Resolution No. 484-2024, approving the City Hall project and authorizing the expenditure of funds by the DCR for the for the City Hall Project.



**CITY COMMISSION
AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO**

DATE: 06/24/2024

Staff Review:

City Manager _____

City Attorney _____

Finance _____

Fire Department _____

Police Department _____

Public Works _____

AGENDA ITEM: First Reading of Resolution No. 484-2024

SUBMITTED BY: Isaias Preza

SYNOPSIS

Review and consider taking action on the second of two readings of Resolution No. 484-2024, approving the City Hall project and authorizing the expenditure of funds by the DCR for the City Hall Project.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS ADDRESSED

N/A

BACKGROUND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Background

On May 9, 2024, City staff met with the Finance Audit Committee (FAC) to discuss a financial plan for purchasing the new City Hall building at 1517 Thompson Rd, Richmond, TX 77469. The FAC advised structuring interfund loans from multiple funds, including the Development Corporation of Richmond (DCR) fund. Subsequently, staff presented the interfund loan plan to the DCR board on June 11, 2024. The DCR Board approved a \$2 million interfund loan at an interest rate of 3.40%, aligned with the April consumer price index inflation rate. Since the DCR interfund loan is classified as a project, it requires two City Commission public readings, with the first scheduled for June 17, 2024, and the second on June 24, 2024.

BUDGET ANALYSIS

Description	General CIP	Development Corporation	\$Change
Revenue			
Transfers In	2,000,000		2,000,000
Total Revenues	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000
Expenditures			
Transfers Out		2,000,000	2,000,000
Total Expenditures	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000
Revenues Over/(Under) Expenditures	\$ 2,000,000	\$ (2,000,000)	-

BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUIRED? YES NO

Requested Amendment: Described above
 Budgeted funds estimated for FY 2024: Described above

Purchasing Review:
Financial/Budget Review:
 FORM CIQ: _____
 FORM 1295 _____

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the first of two readings of Resolution No. 484-2024.

City Manager Approval: _____



City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Special Scheduled City Commission Meeting

600 Morton Street

Richmond, Texas 77469

Monday, June 24, 2024 at 4:30 P.M.

- A4. Review and consider taking action on Resolution No. 484-2024, approving the City Hall project and authorizing the expenditure of funds by the DCR for the for the City Hall Project.

RESOLUTION NO. 484-2024

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND, TEXAS, APPROVING THE CITY HALL PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS BY THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF RICHMOND FOR THE CITY HALL PROJECT; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Section 505.158, Texas Local Government Code requires the City Commission to consider a resolution on two readings for a project proposed by the Development Corporation of Richmond under the Section.

Section 505.159, Texas Local Government Code requires the Development Corporation of Richmond to conduct a public hearing on a project authorized under Section 505.158, which public hearing was held by the Development Corporation of Richmond at its meeting duly posted and held on June 11, 2024.

The Development Corporation of Richmond has forwarded its recommendation to fund an interfund loan for the City Hall project and such funding is in excess of \$10,000.

The City Commission finds that the interfund loan City Hall project will promote new or expanded business development within the City of Richmond, Now, Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND, TEXAS:

Section 1. That the findings and recitations in the preamble to this resolution are found to be true and correct and the orders stated in the preamble to this resolution are hereby ordered.

Section 2. The City Commission does hereby approve the City Hall project and authorize the Development Corporation of Richmond to enter into an interfund loan with the City of Richmond to provide Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00), bearing interest at 3.4 percent per annum, repayable over 10 years for the City Hall project.

Section 3. *Effective date.* This resolution shall be effective from and after its approval and adoption on second reading.

CONSIDERED on first reading this the 17th day of June, 2024.

PASSED AND APPROVED on second and final reading this the 24th day of June, 2024.

Rebecca K. Haas, Mayor

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Lasha Gillespie, City Secretary

Gary W. Smith, City Attorney

**THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF RICHMOND AND
THE CITY OF RICHMOND, TEXAS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT**

STATE OF TEXAS

§

KNOW ALL BY THESE PRESENTS:

COUNTY OF FORT BEND

§

§

THIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (the “Agreement”) is made and entered into by and between the **DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF RICHMOND** (the “DCR”) and **THE CITY OF RICHMOND, TEXAS**, a Texas home rule municipality, (the “City”) (DCR and City collectively referred to as the “Parties”), to be effective on this the 1st day of July, 2024.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the City is acquiring certain real property within the corporate limits of the City of Richmond, Texas, located at 1517 Thompson, Richmond, Fort Bend County, Texas, described as Hunter Oaks, a plat of a 5.148-acre tract of land according to the map or plat thereof recorded in Slide No. 23818 in the Plat Records of Fort Bend County, Texas and under 2002121240 in the Official Public Records in the office of the County Clerk of Fort Bend County, Texas (hereinafter referred to as the “Property”); and

WHEREAS, the City intends to purchase and redevelop the Property as a municipal building to promote or develop new or expanded business development (the “Development”); and

WHEREAS, the successful development of the Property will promote and develop new or expanded business development within the City and will stimulate business and economic growth of the City; and

WHEREAS, City and the DCR have determined that the loan provided herein will directly serve a public purpose, being the promotion of the economic welfare of the City and surrounding areas, and that the Agreement contains the necessary controls to ensure the public purposes stated herein will be accomplished; and

WHEREAS, the use of the Property and the other terms hereof are consistent with promoting local economic development and will stimulate local business and commercial activity; and

WHEREAS, the City and the DCR intend, and in connection with such intention, approve this Economic Development Agreement for purchase and redevelopment of the Property will promote or develop new or expanded business development for the purpose of encouraging business expansion and the creation of new jobs in the City; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest of the City of Richmond that this Agreement be entered with the City to encourage the promote or develop new or expanded business development in the City, the refurbishing of an existing building, the encouragement of new and retention of primary jobs within the City; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 505.158 (b) of the Texas Local Government Code, the City Commission considered Resolution No. 484-2024 for its first reading on June 17, 2024 and its second reading on June 24, 2024 authorizing the project and expenditure by the DCR.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the representations made by the City to the DCR, and the covenants and agreements of the City set forth herein, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the City and the DCR have approved and authorized this Agreement for development loan as follows:

DEFINITIONS

- A. **"Commencement Date"** is defined to mean the effective date established in the preamble to this agreement.
- B. **"Maximum Loan Amount"** is defined as a total of \$2,000,000.00.
- C. **"Property"** is defined to mean Hunter Oaks, a plat of a 5.148-acre tract of land according to the map or plat thereof recorded in Slide No. 23818 in the Plat Records of Fort Bend County, Texas and under 2002121240 in the Official Public Records in the office of the County Clerk of Fort Bend County, Texas (hereinafter referred to as the "Property").
- D. **"Real Property Improvements"** are defined as the purchase of the Property and the renovation and upgrade of an approximately 25,000 square foot space within the existing structure on the Property; such improvements to the Property and shall include buildings, structures or fixtures erected or affixed to land and that are included in the definition of real property set forth in Section 1.04(2), Texas Tax Code, as amended.

Article 1. General Provisions

1.01. **Term.** This Agreement shall become enforceable upon the Effective Date, as hereinafter established, and shall continue until the Expiration Date, as hereinafter established, unless terminated sooner due to lack of execution by the City within ninety (90) days of approval by the DCR and ratification by the City Commission of the City of Richmond or extended by mutual agreement of the Parties in the manner provided for herein.

1.02. **No Conflict of Interest.** The Property is not owned or leased by any member of the DCR or the Richmond City Commission or any family member of either.

1.03 **Recitals.** The recitals in this Agreement are represented by the Parties to be accurate and incorporated for all purposes as part of the Agreement.

1.05 Representations and Warranties.

- A. The DCR hereby represents and warrants to the City that the DCR has the lawful right, power, and authority, under current applicable law, to execute and deliver and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and all of the foregoing have been or will be duly and validly authorized and approved by all necessary the DCR proceedings, findings, and actions, and ratified by the City Commission. Accordingly, this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid, and binding obligation of the DCR, is enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions, and does not require the consent of any other governmental authority.

- B. The City hereby represents and warrants to the DCR that the City has lawful right, power, and authority, under current applicable law, to execute and deliver and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and all of the foregoing have been or will be duly and validly authorized and approved by all actions necessary. Accordingly, this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid, and binding obligation of the City, is enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions, and does not require the consent of any other authority or entity.

Article 2. Performance Criteria

2.01 Performance Criteria. The Parties acknowledge and agree that the City must achieve the following criteria to be eligible to repay the loan funds as contemplated under this Agreement:

- A. The City agrees to acquire and renovate the existing structure on the Property for use as a municipal building and in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.
- B. The construction of the building renovations and improvements on the Property will conform to the building standards set forth by the Building Codes of the City of Richmond. The use of the Property must comply with the City's Unified Development Code. All regulations, codes, and ordinances of the City of Richmond will be adhered to during construction of the building improvements to the property.
- C. The City must submit plans for the redevelopment of the Property within one hundred eighty (180) days of the Commencement Date and shall diligently pursue the issuance of the permits required for the improvements of the Property.
- D. The City must start construction within nine (9) months of the Commencement Date of this Agreement and complete construction and occupy the Property as a municipal building within twenty-four (24) months of the Commencement Date unless the Parties agree in writing to an extension to start or complete construction. As evidence of completion, the City will submit to the DCR a certificate of occupancy allowing use of the property as a municipal building as proof of completion of construction.

In the event City fails to satisfy any of the above-listed criteria, then the DCR may terminate this Agreement by written notice to the City in accordance with Article 6. Upon such notice, the City will promptly repay the outstanding principal and any accrued interest on the Loan and the Parties will be mutually released from this Agreement and without any liability under the Agreement.

2.02. Ongoing Loan Criteria. The Parties acknowledge and agree that the City must achieve the following criteria to be eligible to repay the Loan as contemplated under this Agreement:

- A. The City agrees that the renovated structure will be utilized as a municipal building and used for municipal purposes.
- B. The City agrees to provide an annual written certification to the DCR that the City is in compliance with the terms of this Agreement. The certification shall be in the form of the Annual Loan Report (the "Report") attached hereto as Exhibit A. The Report shall be filed every year for which a Loan payment is due and must be filed not later than April 30 during the term of this Agreement. A failure to submit the Report by this date shall be an Event of Default and subject to the remedies in Article 6.

C. The City agrees that if any terms and conditions of this Agreement are not met or are violated throughout the term of this Agreement, that all Loan payments due from the City during the years of noncompliance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement will be promptly repaid by the City.

Article 3. Loan and Term

3.01 Loan. DCR shall loan to the City a Loan not to exceed \$2,000,000 (the “Loan”) within sixty (60) days of the Commencement Date.

3.02 Term. The term of the Loan will be for a period ten (10) years, beginning on October 1, 2024 and ending on September 31, 2034.

3.03 Interest. The Loan shall bear interest at the rate of 3.40% per annum.

3.04 Repayment. The Loan shall be repaid by the City to DCR in accordance with the repayment schedule on Exhibit B hereto. Payments shall be credited first to accrued interest and the balance to the outstanding principal. The City shall have the right to prepay any amount accrued under this Agreement in full or in part at any time without the imposition of any prepayment fee or penalty and shall not be liable for any interest that has not vested at the time of prepayment.

3.05. The DCR shall have the right, if it deems necessary, to provide five (5) days notice to examine during regular business hours the appropriate business records of the City.

Article 4. Effect of Sale and Assignment

4.01. The City shall not transfer or assign this Agreement without the DCR’s written consent as evidenced by an action duly enacted by Board of Directors after receipt by the DCR of the City’s written notification of such proposed transfer at least sixty (60) days before the effective date thereof, provided that the DCR’s consent shall not unreasonably be withheld, conditioned, or delayed.

4.02. The DCR shall not transfer or assign this Agreement without the City’s written consent as evidenced by an action duly enacted by City Commission after receipt by the City of the DCR’s written notification of such proposed transfer at least sixty (60) days before the effective date thereof, provided that the City’s consent shall not unreasonably be withheld, conditioned, or delayed.

4.03 Any attempted transfer or assignment of this Agreement in violation of the terms set forth in this Article 4 shall be void ab initio and shall entitle the DCR to terminate this Agreement by written notice to the City. Upon such notice, the City will promptly repay the outstanding principal and any accrued interest on the Loan and the parties hereto shall be relieved of all duties hereunder. Provided, however, that such termination shall not be effective if, within ten (10) days after its receipt of the DCR’s termination notice, the City shall notify the DCR that the City has rescinded such attempted transfer or assignment.

4.04 Effective as of the effective date of a transfer or assignment pursuant to Section 4.01 above, the City will be released of any further duties or obligations under this Agreement, provided however, that the transferee or assignee must agree in writing to assume and be bound by the terms of this Agreement before the City will be so released.

Article 5. Events of Default, Notice of Default, Remedies.

5.01. It will be an Event of Default upon the occurrence of the following:

- i. The City's use of the Property not in compliance with the City of Richmond's Unified Development Code;
- ii. The City 's failure to develop the Property in compliance with the building standards set forth by the Building Codes of the City of Richmond; or
- iii. Failure of the City to substantially comply with a provision of this Agreement or a City ordinance applicable to the property; or
- iv. The City vacates or abandons all or any substantial portion of the Property without making reasonable efforts to sell, lease, or assign the Property to an entity that would make reasonable efforts to continue to operate same.

6.02 Notice of Default.

A. City's Default.

1. Upon the occurrence of an Event of Default by the City, then the DCR may notify the City in writing of an alleged failure by the City to comply with a provision of this Agreement, which notice shall specify the alleged failure with reasonable particularity.
2. The City shall, within sixty (60) days after receipt of such notice or such longer period of time as the DCR may specify in such notice, either cure such alleged failure or, in a written response to the DCR, either present facts and arguments in refutation or excuse of such alleged failure or state that such alleged failure will be cured and set forth the method and time schedule for accomplishing such cure.
3. The DCR will review the City's response, if any, and determine (i) whether a failure to comply with a provision has occurred; (ii) whether such failure is excusable; and (iii) whether such failure has been cured or will be cured by the City. The City agrees to cooperate with the DCR's inquiry and to make available and deliver to the DCR, if requested, any records, documents, or other information necessary to address the issues raised in the notice of default to the City.
4. In the event that the DCR determines that such failure has not occurred, or that such failure either has been or will be cured in a manner and in accordance with a schedule reasonably satisfactory to the DCR, or that such failure is excusable, such determination shall conclude the investigation.
5. If the DCR determines that a failure to comply with a provision has occurred and that such failure is not excusable and has not been or will not be cured by the alleged defaulting Party in a manner and in accordance with a schedule reasonably satisfactory to the DCR, then the DCR Board may take any appropriate action to enforce this Agreement at law or in equity.

B. DCR's Default

Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, the DCR will not be deemed to be in default hereunder until the passage of sixty (60) calendar days after receipt by the DCR of written notice of default from the City, or if such default cannot be cured within such period, then such additional period as shall be reasonable and agreed to, provided the DCR commences to cure such default within such period and proceeds diligently to prosecute such cure to completion.

5.03 Remedies

A. City's Default

In the event of the City 's uncured default of this Agreement, the City shall repay all outstanding principal and accrued interest, then the DCR may terminate this Agreement and pursue all other remedies at law or in equity.

B. DCR's Default

In the event of the DCR's uncured default to this Agreement, then the City's sole and exclusive remedy will be to terminate this Agreement. Upon such termination, the DCR will be relieved of all obligations under this Agreement.

Article 6. Notice

6.01. All notices required or permitted by this Agreement will be delivered either by: (a) certified mail, postage prepaid, effective five (5) days after mailing; or (b) by hand delivery, effective upon signed and receipted delivery, in either case addressed as follows (or to such other address as a party may specify to the other party by notice delivered in accordance with the terms hereof):

As to the DCR:

Development Corporation of Richmond
Attn: Economic Development Director
402 Morton Street
Richmond, TX 77469

As to the City:

City of Richmond, Texas
Attn: City Manager
402 Morton Street
Richmond, Texas 77469

Article 7. DCR Authorization

This Agreement was authorized by the Board of Directors of the Development Corporation of Richmond on at its meeting on June 11, 2024 and by Resolution No. 484-2024, adopted by the City Commission of the City of Richmond at its meeting held on June 25, 2024, authorizing the Mayor of the City to execute this Agreement on behalf of the City and the President of the DCR to execute this Agreement on behalf of the DCR.

Article 8. Severability

In the event any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, phrase, or word herein is held invalid, illegal, or unconstitutional, the balance of this Agreement shall stand, shall be enforceable and shall be read as if the parties intended at all times to delete only said invalid section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, phrase, or word.

Article 9. Applicable Law

This Agreement shall be construed under the laws of the State of Texas, without regard to conflict of law provisions. Venue for any action under this Agreement shall be the State District Court of Fort Bend County, Texas.

Article 10. Counterparts

This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original and constitute one and the same instrument.

Article 11. Amendments

This Agreement embodies the complete Agreement of the parties hereto, superseding all oral or written previous and contemporary agreements between the parties and relating to the matters in this Agreement, and except as otherwise provided herein cannot be amended without written agreement of the parties to be attached to and made a part of this Agreement.

Article 12. Recordation of Agreement

It is mutually hereby agreed that a certified copy of this Agreement shall be recorded by the City of Richmond City Secretary in the Records of the City of Richmond, Fort Bend County, Texas and in the records of the DCR.

Article 13. Incorporation of Recitals

The determinations recited and declared in the preambles to this Agreement are hereby incorporated herein as part of this Agreement.

Article 14. Incorporation of Exhibits

All exhibits to this Agreement are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes wherever reference is made to the same.

Article 15. Force Majeure

It is expressly understood and agreed by the Parties to this Agreement that if the performance of any obligations hereunder is delayed by reason of war, civil commotion, acts of God, inclement weather, fire or other casualty, court injunction, delays in issuing permits or approvals, the unavailability of materials, pandemic or other public health conditions, or other cause outside the control of the Party who is to perform, the Party so obligated or permitted shall be excused from doing or performing the same during such period of delay, so that the time period applicable to such obligation or requirement shall be extended for a period of time equal to the period such Party was delayed.

Article 16. No Waiver of Immunities

The Parties acknowledge that the City is a political subdivision of the State of Texas and under the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas, possesses certain rights and privileges, is subject to certain limitations and restrictions, and only has such authority as is granted to it under the Constitution and the laws of the State of Texas. Notwithstanding any provision of this Agreement, nothing in this Agreement is intended to be, nor will it be construed to be, a waiver of the City's sovereign immunity of the State of Texas or a prospective waiver of restriction of any of the rights, remedies, claims and privilege. of the State of Texas. THE PARTIES ALSO EXPRESSLY AGREE THAT NO PROVISION OF THIS AGREEMENT IS IN ANY WAY INTENDED TO CONSTITUTE A WAIVER BY EITHER PARTY OF ANY IMMUNITIES FROM SUIT OR LIABILITY THAT THE PARTY MAY HAVE BY OPERATION OF LAW. __

(Signature Page Follows)

EXECUTED in triplicate (3) originals, this the ____ day of _____, 2024.

DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF RICHMOND

By: _____
Kit Jones, President

ATTEST:

By: _____
Nancie Rain, Secretary

EXECUTED in triplicate originals this the ____ day of _____, 202_.

CITY OF RICHMOND, TEXAS

By: _____
Rebecca K. Haas, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: _____
Lasha Gillespie, City Secretary

EXHIBIT "A"

ANNUAL LOAN REPORT FORM

Annual Loan Certification - Tax Year _____

PROJECT STATUS

Commence construction of Real Property Improvements _____

Please provide each of the following documents as an attachment to this Certification (first year only):

- Issuance of a building permit from the City of Richmond
- Certificate of Occupancy
- The Property is used as a municipal building for municipal purposes.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information and any attached documents provided in this Annual Loan Certification are true and accurate and in compliance with the terms of the Agreement with the Development Corporation of Richmond.

EXHIBIT "B"

LOAN REPAYMENT SCHEDULE



City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Special Scheduled City Commission Meeting

600 Morton Street

Richmond, Texas 77469

Monday, June 24, 2024 at 4:30 P.M.

- A5. Review and consider taking action on Ordinance No. 2024-08, budget amendment for FY 2024.



**CITY COMMISSION
AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO**

DATE: 06/24/2024

Staff Review:

City Manager _____

City Attorney _____

Finance _____

Fire Department _____

Police Department _____

Public Works _____

AGENDA ITEM: Budget Amendment

SUBMITTED BY: Isaias Preza

SYNOPSIS

Consideration of and action on CITY OF RICHMOND ORDINANCE NO. 2024-08: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND, TEXAS AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF RICHMOND, TEXAS TO PROVIDE THAT THE REVISED BUDGET ADDRESS FUNDS RELATING TO CERTAIN CAPITAL AND OPERATING BUDGET MATTERS AND THAT THIS AMENDMENT BE ADOPTED TO INCLUDE THOSE REVISIONS TO THE BUDGETED AMOUNTS FOR THOSE FUNDS.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS ADDRESSED

N/A

BACKGROUND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Background

The City’s budget is adopted by one reading of an ordinance each year by the City Commission in accordance with State law and the City Charter (“Charter”). After the budget is adopted, additional appropriations that are needed require City Commission approval through a budget ordinance, which is provided for under the Charter.

To streamline the process, the Finance Department consolidates amendments into a single budget ordinance and presents them as needed. More specifically, this amendment appropriates funding for the purchase of the new City Hall building located at 1517 Thompson Rd, Richmond, TX 77469. The funding will come from four different sources: the General Fund, Utility fund, the Surface Water Fund, and the Development Corporation Fund.

Budget Amendment Summary by Fund

General Fund

The General Fund will be amended to reflect a transfer out to the General Capital Improvement Program Fund in the amount of \$1,432,578. The transfer will be processed for the current fiscal year, 2024.

Utility Fund

The Utility Fund will be amended to reflect a transfer out to the General Capital Improvement Program Fund in the amount of \$1,000,000. The transfer will be processed for the current fiscal year, 2024.

Surface Water Fund

The Surface Water Fund will be amended to reflect a transfer out to the General Capital Improvement Program Fund in the amount of \$2,000,000. This amount will be repaid to the Surface Water Fund through a 5-year interfund loan at an annual interest rate of 2.62%.

Development Corporation Fund

The Development Corporation Fund will be amended to reflect a transfer out to the General Capital Improvement Program Fund in the amount of \$2,000,000. This amount will be repaid to the Development Corporation Fund through a 10-year interfund loan. The Development Corporation Board passed a motion on June 11, 2024, approving the interfund loan at an annual interest rate of 3.40%.

Description	General CIP	General Fund	Utility Fund	Surface Water Fund	Development Corporation	\$Change
Revenue						
Transfers In	6,432,578					6,432,578
Total Revenues	\$ 6,432,578	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,432,578
Expenditures						
Transfers Out		1,432,578	1,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	6,432,578
Total Expenditures	\$ -	\$ 1,432,578	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 6,432,578
Revenues Over/(Under)						
Expenditures	\$ 6,432,578	\$ (1,432,578)	\$ (1,000,000)	\$ (2,000,000)	\$ (2,000,000)	\$ -

BUDGET ANALYSIS

See above

BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUIRED? YES NO

Requested Amendment: Described above

Budgeted funds estimated for FY 2024: Described above

Purchasing Review:

Financial/Budget Review:

FORM CIQ: _____

FORM 1295 _____

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of Ordinance Number 2024-08 amending the FY2024 budget to reflect the budget amendments described above.

City Manager Approval: _____

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Amendment



RICHMOND
EST. **TEXAS** 1837

Background

- ▶ **Staff is evaluating various financial strategies to reimburse the General Cash Capital Program Improvement (CIP) fund for the acquisition of the new City Hall building at 1517 Thompson Rd, Richmond, TX 77469. The total City Hall building purchase was \$6,432,578.**



RICHMOND
EST. **TEXAS** 1837

Funding Options

- ▶ **Development Corporation of Richmond Interfund Loan**
 - **Advantages**
 - **Early Payoff Option With No Penalty**
 - **Lower Interest Rate**
 - **Flexibility**
 - **Disadvantages**
 - **Less DCR funding availability**
 - **Potential Less Interest Earned**
 - **Mitigation**
 - **General Fund early payoff should a major DCR project arise**



DCR Interfund Loan Structure

- ▶ 10 Year Time Frame
- ▶ DCR Recommended Interest Rate
 - General Accounting Standard Board Rate 2.62%
 - **April Consumer Price Index 3.40% (DCR Recommended)**
 - 10-year treasury yield 4.39%
- ▶ Annual Payments Beginning Fiscal Year 2025 - 2035
- ▶ Early Payoff Option With No Penalty



RICHMOND
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Funding Options

- ▶ **Surface Water Interfund Loan**
 - **Advantages**
 - **Early Payoff Option**
 - **Lower Interest Rate**
 - **Flexibility; Able to Amend Agreement**
 - **Disadvantages**
 - **Less Surface Water funding availability**
 - **Potential Less Interest Earned**
 - **Mitigation**
 - **General Fund early payoff should a project or need arise**



Surface Water Interfund Loan Structure

- ▶ 5 Year Time Frame
- ▶ Staff Recommended Interest Rate
 - **General Accounting Standard Board Rate 2.62% (Fair Interest Rate Recommended by City Auditor)**
 - April Consumer Price Index 3.40%
 - 10-year treasury yield 4.39%
- ▶ Annual Payments Beginning Fiscal Year 2025 - 2030
- ▶ Early Payoff Option With No Penalty



Funding Options

- ▶ **General and/or Utilities Cash Transfer**
 - **Advantages**
 - **Utilization of Available One-Time Fund Balance**
 - **Disadvantages**
 - **Less one-time funding availability**
 - **Adds financial constraint to future fiscal years**
 - **Mitigation**
 - **Utilize debt instead of cash**



Funding Options

- ▶ **Debt Funded**
 - **Advantages**
 - **Less financial constraint to future fiscal years**
 - **Allows cash utilization to be expanded over time**
 - **Disadvantages**
 - **No early payoff option**
 - **Higher interest rate (latest rate 3.94%)**
 - **Decreases General Fund property tax revenue**
 - **Mitigation**
 - **Utilize cash instead of debt**



Staff Recommendation

Funding Source	Amount
General Fund Cash (One-Time Transfer)	\$1,432,578
Utility Fund Cash (One-Time Transfer)	\$1,000,000
DCR Interfund Loan (10 Year Interfund Loan)	\$2,000,000
Surface Water Interfund Loan (5 Year Interfund Loan)	\$2,000,000
Total	\$6,432,578



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EST. TEXAS 1837

QUESTIONS?



RICHMOND
EST. **TEXAS** 1837



ORDINANCE NO. 2024-08

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF RICHMOND ANNUAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2023 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2024 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING APPROPRIATIONS FROM THE GENERAL FUND BALANCE, THE SURFACE WATER FUND, AND THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FUND FOR THE PURCHASE OF A NEW CITY HALL BUILDING WHICH WAS UNFORESEEN DURING THE NORMAL BUDGET PROCESS

The City Commission passed and approved ordinance number 2023-24 dated September 18, 2023, adopting and approving an operating budget for the City of Richmond, Texas and authorizing appropriations for the fiscal year October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024, and providing an effective date.

City Charter, Section 7.08, "Amending the Budget," provides: "Under conditions which may arise and which could not reasonably have been foreseen in the normal process of planning the budget, the City Commission may, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the City Commission, amend or change the budget to provide for any additional expense in which the general welfare of the citizenry is involved. These amendments shall be by ordinance and shall become an attachment to the original budget."

Revenues that were not reasonably foreseeable and expenditures necessitated by the purchase of a building as a new City Hall require the amendment and change to the 2023-2024 fiscal year budget.

For the general welfare of the citizenry there exists such a necessity to provide for additional expense to meet unusual and unforeseen items during the normal budget process and could not have been included in the original budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

Section 1. The facts and recitations set forth in the preamble of this Resolution are hereby found to be true and correct.

Section 2. The City Commission adopts and approves the amendment to the Annual Budget for fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024 to provide for additional expense which could not reasonably have been foreseen in the normal process of planning the budget to provide for the general welfare of the citizenry as set forth in Exhibit A attached hereto.

Section 3. The City Secretary is directed to attach a copy of this ordinance to the original budget.

Section 4. A copy of this ordinance shall be filed in the office of the county clerk.

Section 5. That this ordinance shall become effective on and after its adoption.

PASSED AND APPROVED this the 24th day of June, 2024.

Rebecca K. Haas, Mayor

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Lasha Gillespie, City Secretary

Gary W. Smith, City Attorney

Exhibit A



City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Special Scheduled City Commission Meeting

600 Morton Street

Richmond, Texas 77469

Monday, June 24, 2024 at 4:30 P.M.

- A6. Review and discuss proposed rate model changes within the Utility Master Plan.

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City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Special Scheduled City Commission Meeting

600 Morton Street

Richmond, Texas 77469

Monday, June 24, 2024 at 4:30 P.M.

- A7. Review and discuss the Draft of the Richmond Old Town Plan and Implementation Summary.



**CITY COMMISSION
AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO**

DATE: June 24, 2024

Staff Review:

City Manager _____

City Attorney _____

Finance _____

Fire Department _____

Police Department _____

Public Works _____

AGENDA ITEM:

**SUBMITTED BY: Mason A. Garcia, Planning Director
Planning Department**

SYNOPSIS

This agenda item is a presentation on the draft Olde Town Plan and Richmond Olde Town Implementation Summary. Kendig Keast Collaborative will provide an overview and discussion on the priority action initiatives within the Olde Town Richmond Plan and Richmond Olde Town Implementation Summary.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2014 GOALS ADDRESSED

The Comprehensive Master Plan includes five general methods for plan implementation (see page 11). The Specific Plans and Studies implementation method notes that additional planning work or special study to provide detail at a more granular level is needed for several areas of the City, which is more appropriate than the implementation of the Comprehensive Master Plan for specific areas. The Olde Town Plan uses the aforementioned method to ensure an in-depth assessment of the subject area is provided.

BACKGROUND

As part of the recommended five-year update for the Comprehensive Master Plan, The City of Richmond has hired a consultant to develop an Olde Town Plan. The plan examines Downtown, portions of Olde Town and other zoning districts in the general area of the Highway 90A corridor to greater detail and provides a blueprint of priority action initiatives along with timelines in which said items may be completed.

BUDGET ANALYSIS

FUNDING SOURCE	ACCOUNT NUMBER	PROJECT CODE/NAME	FY 2023 - 2024 FUNDS BUDGETED	FY 2023 - 2024 FUNDS AVAILABLE	AMOUNT REQUESTED
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUIRED? YES _____ NO

Requested Amendment: N/A
Budgeted funds estimated for FY 2023 - 2024: N/A

Purchasing Review: N/A
Financial/Budget Review: N/A

FORM CIQ: N/A

FORM 1295 N/A

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

A draft of the Olde Town Plan and Richmond Olde Town Implementation Summary have been submitted by the Planning Consultant Kendig Keast Collaborative for review by the Mayor and City Commission.

STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION

Review and Discussion of the Olde Town Plan and proposed implementation timeline.

City Manager Approval: _____



Olde Town Plan Richmond, TX





Contents:

Introduction

Planning versus Wishful Thinking

Part I: Olde Town Past and Present

Physical and Historic Context

Part II: Opportunities and Objectives

Plan Goals

Opportunities and Potentials

Part III: 10-Year Vision

10 Year Vision

Part IV: Implementation

Effective Redevelopment Planning

Implementation Summary

Early Action Projects (0-2 Years)

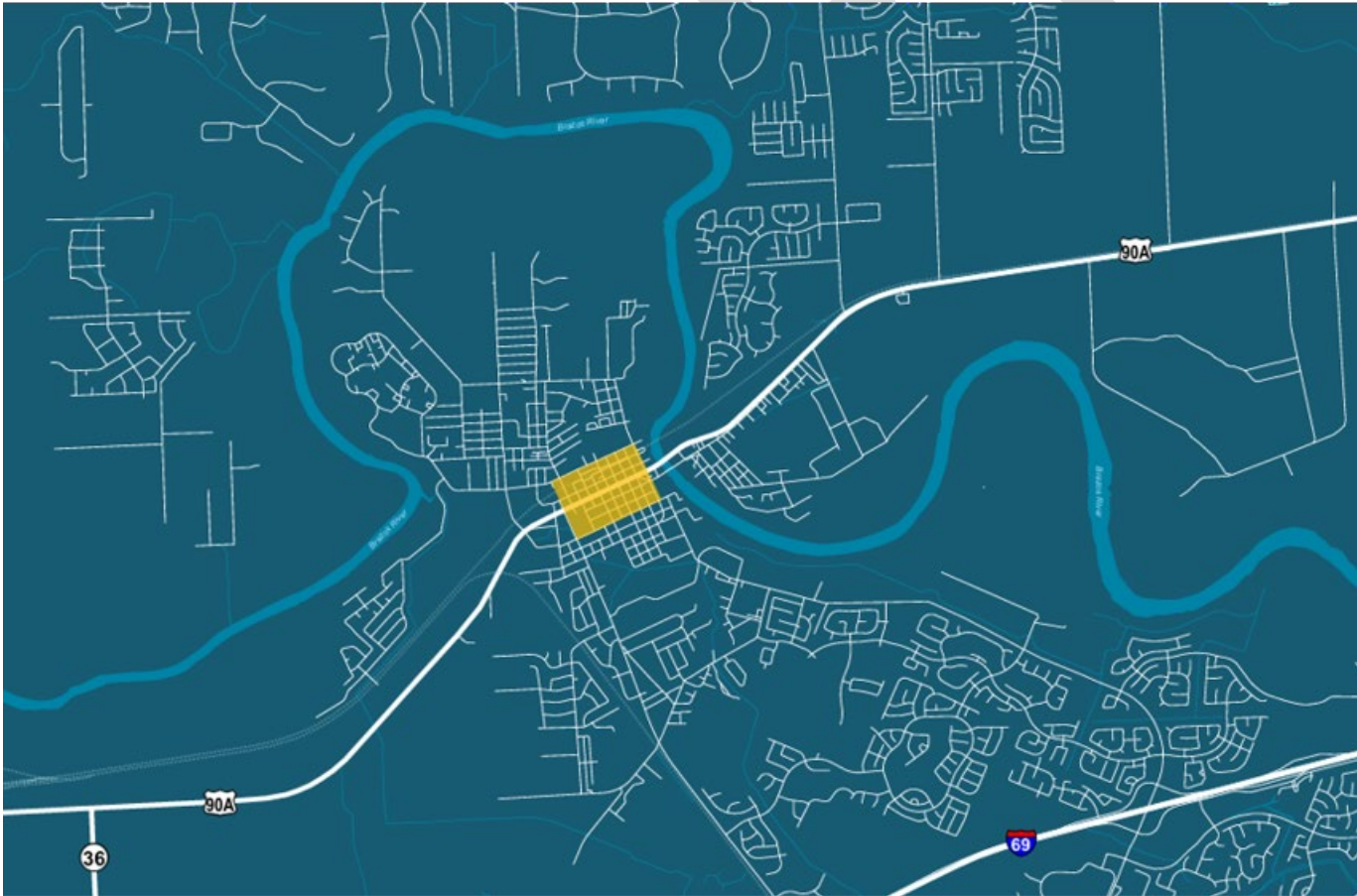
Short-Term Priorities (2-5 Years)

Longer-Term Projects (5+ Years)



INTRODUCTION

Richmond’s Olde Town area is one of the most authentic and historically intact downtown areas in the entire Houston Metro region. With its landmark county courthouse, historic “main” (Morton) street, blocks of historic homes and adjacent riverfront, the district has all the ingredients of a storybook, “Norman Rockwell” downtown. Yet despite these enviable qualities, Olde Town’s many assets are not showcased in any meaningful way and they exist mostly in isolation from one another: The historic courthouse area is cut off from the core Downtown by a busy highway; the historic residential quarter is separated from the core Downtown by pockets of commercial strip development; Olde Town’s signature Wessendorf Park is stranded behind an active rail corridor, and the river is mostly invisible and inaccessible. Although many of the residential blocks are graced with majestic rows of live oaks, and there are many excellent examples of historic restoration throughout, there is a noticeable lack of attention to civic beautification in its streets and other public spaces. The district as a whole has a general utilitarian and “unloved” aspect to it.



Olde Town Richmond is centrally located on the west bank of the Brazos River in the heart of Fort Bend County.



City leadership recognizes that the area comprising “Olde Town” is special yet that it can be so much more. This



acknowledgement is the impetus for this plan which, as part of Richmond’s larger citywide Comprehensive Master Plan Update, seeks to make it a better and more inviting place – more than just the sum of its current parts. Meanwhile, the pending reconstruction of 2nd Street promises to reduce the risk of flooding in the interior part of the district thus eliminating one of the main factors inhibiting redevelopment. Together with Olde Town's existing “good bones” and newly motivated public leadership, the area is poised for great things.

Planning versus Wishful Thinking

Effective revitalization planning requires focus on people and programs as well “bricks and mortar.” It is equal parts physical design plan, economic development strategy and public policy framework. Achieving tangible results requires financial resources, staffing capacity, private investment and political leadership.

Like any plan, the Olde Town Plan will require the combined application of:

- Zoning;
- Incentives; and
- Direct Public Investment to make it materialize.

It will also need developers and entrepreneurs who are willing to invest, along with private property owners and elected officials who are motivated to change the status quo.

The plan, as a whole, is conceptual in nature and is intended to convey a preferred direction, but not an absolute direction, for district development. The plan does not attempt to capture all of the desired physical changes for the district – only the ones that seem the most realistic based on current market conditions and opportunities, resource capacities, and where the City is in the strongest position to help drive outcomes.

Purpose of the Plan

The main purpose of the plan is to inform and provide a window into the City’s current thinking about the district’s future. It is designed to help “steer” the voluntary actions of private developers and landowners (working in their own interests) in the approximate direction of the plan through the gentle push and pull of zoning, incentives and leading public investments. The plan also provides City officials with a roadmap on where and when to make strategic investments, including when to use incentives and, as importantly, when not to.



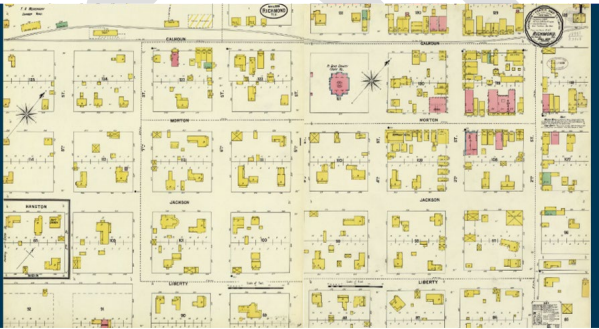
PART I: OLDE TOWN PAST AND PRESENT

Physical and Historic Context



Morton Street c. 1920s and today

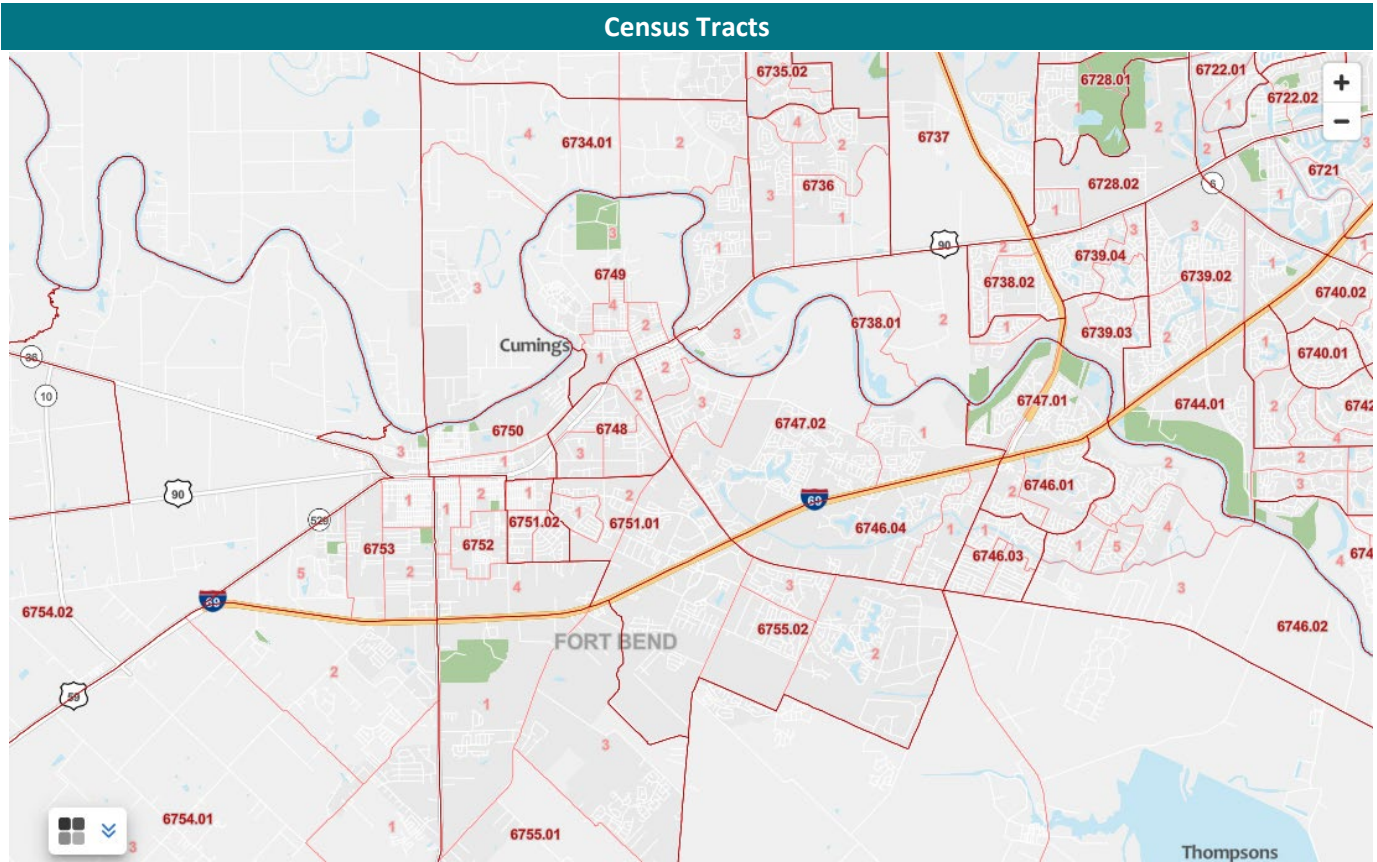
Olde Town Richmond is located on the west bank of the Brazos River and serves as the historic county seat for Fort Bend County. It is home to the landmark Fort Bend County Courthouse and features a traditional main street commercial district along a four-block stretch of Morton Street between 2nd and 5th Streets. The Downtown area (also known as the Historic District) encompasses roughly 100 square blocks (approximately 150 acres) and is laid out in a traditional grid pattern of 250 x 250-foot blocks. The southernmost extension of this grid is an approximately 16 square block area known as Freemans Town – a historically African American enclave made up of lots as small as 3,500 square feet.



The core Downtown area is bounded by Preston Street on the north, the Brazos River on the east, Austin Street on the south and Thompson Road on the west and is bisected north to south by U.S. 90A which carries between 14,000 and 28,000 vehicles per day through the Downtown area. Downtown’s main north-south through street is Thompson Road, which carries up to 11,000 vehicles per day through the west side of Downtown. An active Union Pacific rail line near the northern edge of Downtown carries multiple long trains per day. Major activity centers in or near Downtown include the Fort Bend County government area, the Fort Bend County Justice Center, the OakBend Medical Center and George Park.

Demographically, the Downtown includes portions of two census tracts, 6749 and 6748. Summary demographics of these tracts are summarized below.

Demographically, the Downtown includes portions of two census tracts, 6749 and 6748. Summary demographics of these tracts are summarized below.



Downtown includes portions of census tracts 6749 and 6748.

	6749	6748
Area (square miles)	3.7	0.3
Population density (persons per square mile)	1,400	1,805
Average persons per household	3.5	2
Median household income	\$38,137	\$51,125
% Homeownership	64%	62%
% 1-family homes	57%	64%
Median home value	\$82,300	\$161,300



The proposed raising and reconstruction of 2nd Street in Downtown Richmond has the potential to remove a portion of the district out of the flood hazard area.

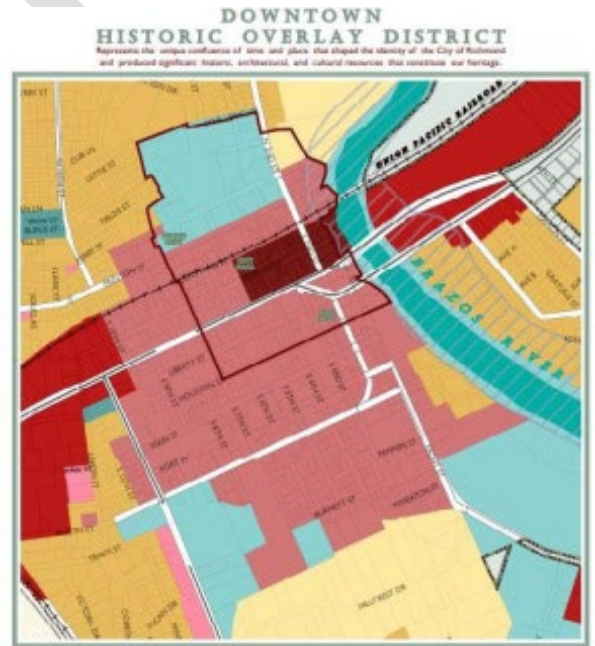
Source: developrichmondtx.com, StoryStudio.Chron.com

Most of the Downtown land area south of Calhoun Street is in an area of minimal flood hazard. A large area to the north of Calhoun within the Historic Overlay Zone is in a designated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) AE floodplain zone. Plans to reconstruct and regrade a low-lying portion of 2nd Street between Jackson and Calhoun Streets is expected to provide added flood protection to the Downtown commercial core and may provide the justification to get part of the area remapped to a lesser flood risk designation (which could be important for insurance and commercial underwriting purposes). The City’s current stormwater management regulations mandate no more than 50% non-pervious lot coverage, making single-lot infill development on many smaller Downtown lots difficult or unfeasible.

All of the Downtown area is in the Historic Overlay district. The historic Morton Street commercial core is zoned “Downtown DN” allowing for traditional “main street” development characterized by buildings built right up to the sidewalk with only on-street parking.

Downtown Richmond presents as one of the most distinctive historic communities in the greater Houston area with tremendous potential for day tourism and residential growth. Significant challenges for Downtown include:

- Taming U.S. 90A traffic to allow better north-south pedestrian movement;
- Optimizing the Downtown’s relatively compact land area by encouraging more mixed-use infill redevelopment and shared parking;
- Improving and expanding the supply of Downtown housing;
- Adapting key buildings for more active uses; and
- Capitalizing on the amenity potential of the Brazos River.



Downtown Historic Overlay District

Source: City of Richmond

Public Opinion

In speaking with Downtown businesses and property owners, major areas of concern include: the high number of vacant or underutilized buildings, the lack of public amenities, and a shortage of peak-time parking availability (made worse by the lack of time limitations for on-street parking and employee usage). A few expressed their desire to see more attention to Downtown beautification. Others said that the lack of after-hours activity Downtown made the area seem abandoned and unsafe.

Survey results indicate that many Richmond residents appreciate Downtown's historic main street atmosphere but would like it more consistently used and enlivened with more active storefronts; public space; pedestrian and bike facilities and living options. Several respondents noted that the City needed to have a stronger focus on historic preservation and protecting downtown's charm with improved beautification (i.e., streets, signs, sidewalks, parks, etc.), and that it needed to take better advantage of its historic county-seat and riverfront location. Other themes included the need to: better support local businesses, improve parking, expand housing options, reduce building vacancy and add more family-friendly attractions.

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PART II: OPPORTUNITIES AND OBJECTIVES

Plan Goals

Working toward a more vibrant and adaptive Downtown can be captured in **six overlapping themes**:



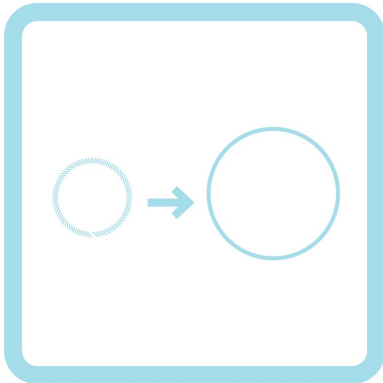
Enhance the Business Environment



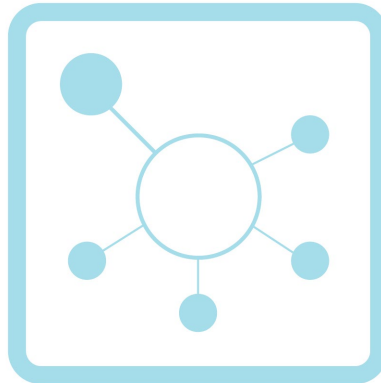
Reinforce Community Character



Improve the User Experience



Expand, Define, Diversify



Connect Activity Nodes



Capitalize on the River



Enhance the Business Environment



Unlike many small city downtowns, Downtown Richmond is fortunate to have a number of stable, anchor businesses and a comparatively low commercial vacancy rate. (Downtown’s well known peak-hour parking problem is, quite frankly, a good problem to have.) That said, achieving a truly vibrant, and economically sustainable downtown will require expanding its supply of both turnkey commercial space and new and rehabbed housing units – the latter to help keep the Downtown active throughout the day and week and to provide a “captive market” for Downtown businesses. It will also involve creating incentives programs to help fill empty storefronts and to assure the long-term sustainability of existing businesses. The City and its Development Corporation (DCR) should work to retain and expand businesses Downtown by focusing in the following core areas:

- New financing programs to improve the physical appearance, rentability and the overall supply of Downtown properties, along with those that support the viability of individual businesses. Potential programs include:
 - A per-unit cash incentive for upper-floor apartment conversions as well as new apartment construction;
 - Commercial “white box” grants (small grants to property owners to make basic interior tenant-readiness improvements such as demolition, re-wiring, reflooring, and the construction of partitions, bathrooms, etc.); and
 - Working capital loans (or loan guarantees) for existing businesses.

Recommendation:
→ Introduce new and/or expanded loan and grant programs targeted specifically to Downtown businesses and buildings.



These programs should be marketed specifically for non-franchise Downtown businesses and properties. The “bricks and mortar” programs should contain specific design guidelines to assure that historic buildings are adapted and restored in an architecturally appropriate way.

Funding these types of programs could come from a variety of state, federal and local sources including the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) and [U.S. Economic Development Administration](#) (Downtown revolving loan fund seed capital); local banks (pooled Community Reinvestment Act loan funds) or the creation of a Municipal Management District.

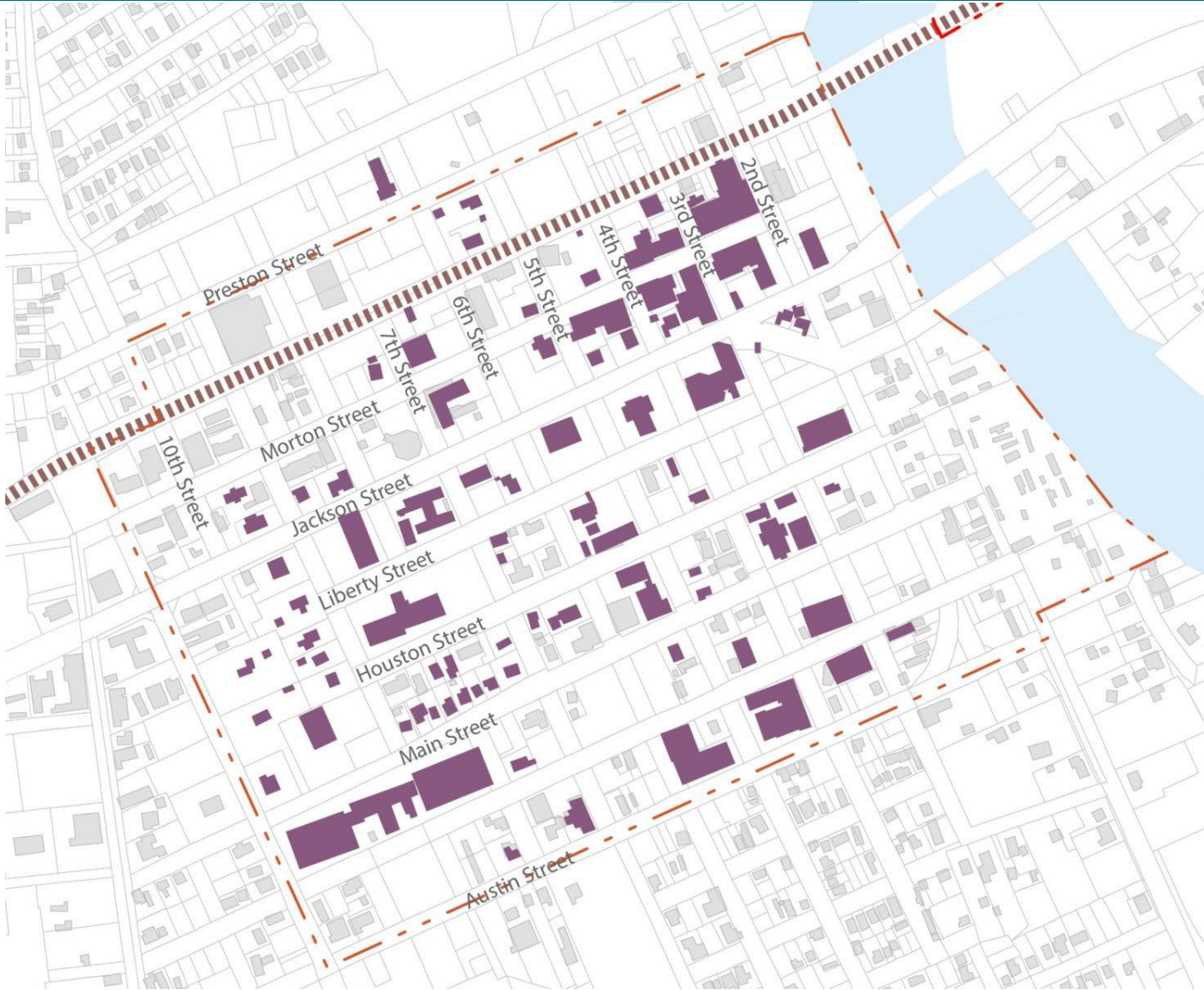


Recommendation:

→ Assemble and “package” Downtown sites and market them for new mixed-use (infill) development.

This involves expanding the DCR’s current role in supporting redevelopment activity through selected, strategic and patient interventions in the Downtown real estate market. The DCR’s optimal role here would be to attempt to control at-risk or blighted Downtown properties and to shepherd them into the hands of capable developers who are aligned with the City’s vision for the greater downtown. A “classic” role for the DCR would be to attempt to control (through option or direct arms-length purchase) parcels that can unlock larger redevelopment opportunities by consolidating them under single third-party ownership. The DCR’s ownership stake can help assure that any future project meets the City’s goal for Downtown in terms of design and/or tenancy as enshrined in development agreements with developers.

Permanent Stock: Historic, Well-Used, Sturdy



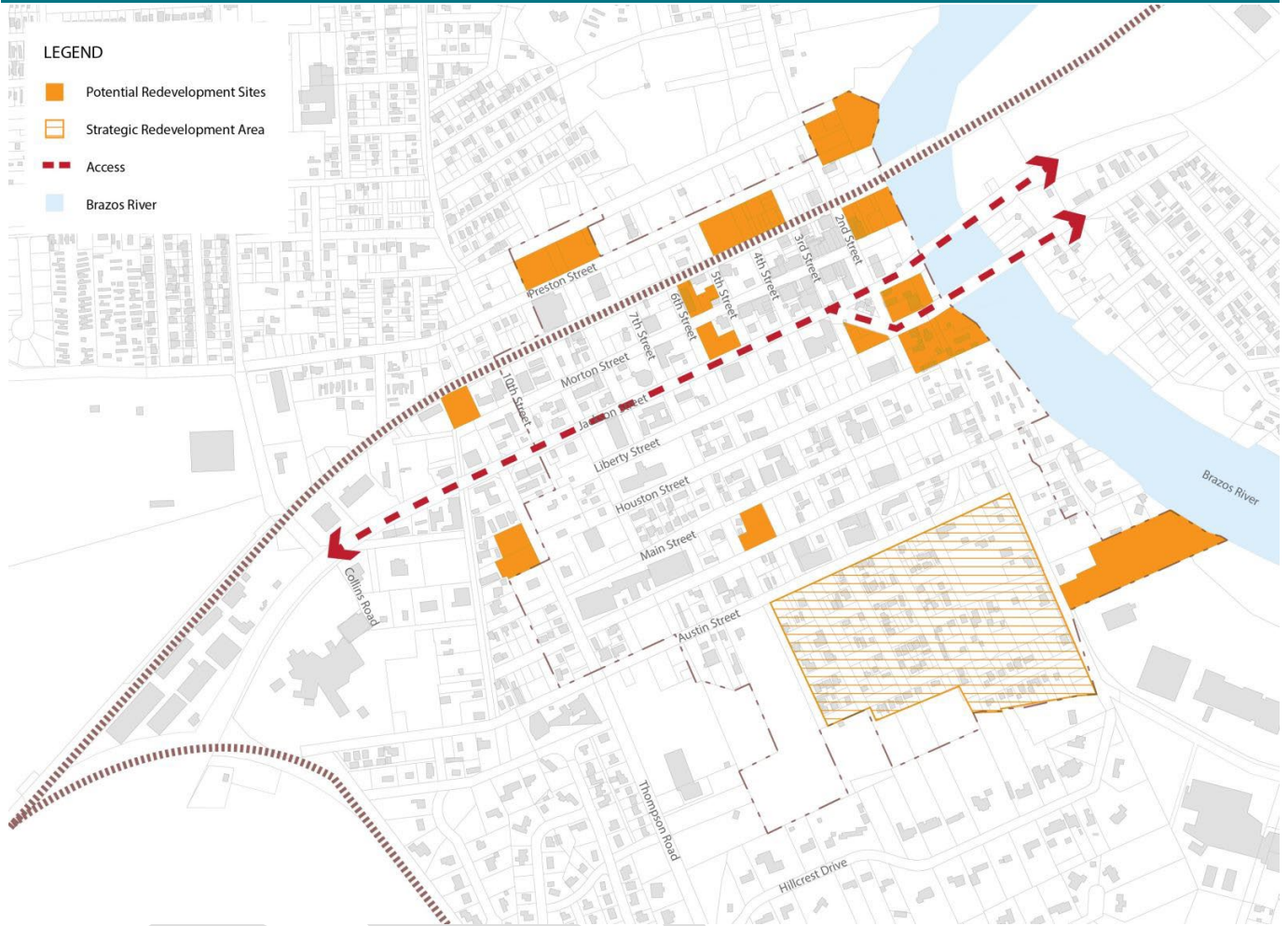


Olde Town's "solid stock": The highlighted buildings represent structures which because of their historic value, size, condition and stable occupancy should remain permanent fixtures in Olde Town. This analysis indicates that large sections of the district's riverfront and north end have significant redevelopment potential as shown in the next graphic.

As a general rule, the DCR should attempt to avoid purely opportunistic acquisitions unless they can be quickly monetized (i.e., flipped) to support future acquisitions. A major initial focus for the DCR's real estate ventures should be Richmond's Downtown riverfront which is significantly underdeveloped and under highly fragmented ownership. The DCR's involvement may help accelerate needed reinvestment in this area, which by the nature of said ownership, may discourage all but the most patient of private developers.

DRAFT

Potential Redevelopment Sites



Potential redevelopment sites based on current vacancy, underutilization and marginal building stock.

Reinforce Community Character



Preserving Downtown Richmond’s small-town character emerged as a top priority in the community survey that accompanied the Comprehensive Master Plan update and preparation of this Olde Town Plan. Preserving character is as much about making sure

that historic buildings are protected as it is about making sure that new buildings fit in architecturally.

It also involves having a curated mix of family-friendly, locally-oriented businesses and residences so that Downtown does not become dominated by any one type of thing or activity (i.e., bars, antique shops, franchise stores, etc.).



Example of mixed-use style development appropriate to the Downtown area.

Recommendations:

- Create a set of Olde Town urban design guidelines to provide architectural controls for new construction.
- Develop special design criteria for prospective development of any City-owned property including preservation of public trail easements on any river-adjacent property.
- Broaden the purview of the Historical Commission by creating an omnibus Design Review Board to interpret and apply both the historic preservation standards and new construction design guidelines in an advisory capacity vis-à-vis the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Consider pursuing National Historic District status for Olde Town to gain access to [Federal Historic District Tax Credits](#) for qualified renovations.

Community character should also be reinforced through the design and quality of public streets and infrastructure. The district today presents very little in the way of complimentary streetlights, street furniture or other sidewalk treatments.



Improve the User Experience



Making Downtown an easy and attractive place to live and do business involves a range of potential physical and service improvements designed to improve the overall experience of Downtown. One of these is to ease Downtown’s parking needs especially as it begins to redevelop.

Having an adequate supply of available parking is critical in supporting Downtown’s growth and vitality. However, relying strictly on the construction of new public or private parking lots has a deadening effect on downtowns such as Richmond’s that, frankly, need more of just the opposite; namely, “activation.” Excessive surface parking also ties up real estate that could be put to a higher and better “human” use. In a land-constricted downtown such as in Richmond, increased enlivenment and activation is absolutely critical in improving vitality.

Other options to maximize parking involve making optimal use of existing parking when it is needed the most; taking better advantage of remote parking; and looking for ways to incorporate publicly accessible, shared parking in new private developments.

Regarding the first of these, the City should enforce maximum parking hours on Downtown streets so that people cannot tie up spaces all day, particularly employees of Downtown businesses. This may be as simple as posting two-hour parking limit signs backed up with routine enforcement. In the future, the City may choose to install a new generation of smart meters.

Recommendation:
→ Explore flexible, “time-demand managed” parking solutions that do not rely exclusively on the construction of new single-user surface parking lots.

Recommendation:
→ Incorporate/incentivize public parking in new private development.

As for publicly accessible off-street parking, the City has already entered into a time-restricted lease agreement with at least one Downtown church whose peak parking needs (Sundays) run exactly counter to the rest of Downtown’s. The City should continue to explore these types of flexible lease/user agreements on private property and explore ways to incorporate public parking in new private developments; for instance, by retaining parking leaseback rights on private developments on formerly City-owned property.



With current cost estimates at over \$50,000 a stall, the economics of building and operating structured parking in Downtown Richmond is challenging to say the least. However, rather than having exclusively public facilities, the City could offer to purchase a “parking condo” in a future new podium style Downtown building to help offset the need for additional public parking and to improve the economics of parking integrated into new private development. Such shared-use parking facilities would be sized to accommodate both the public and building occupants under a shared-use agreement with the developer. Similarly, the City could choose to sell or lease, at a very nominal price, just the air rights of a future City-owned parcel or – effectively the same thing – retain a parking easement on a parcel it chooses to sell, to expand public parking and encourage private development at the same time (see the related graphics/examples later in this plan).



A basic package of decorative street lights, street furniture and sidewalk accents is needed in Downtown Richmond.

Further options to ease Downtown parking needs may exist on remote lots under a couple of different scenarios. One of these would be to establish a free peak-hour Downtown valet service along Morton Street paid for via a Municipal Management District or by voluntary pooling of funds by Downtown business owners. Valet stations could be located at the corners of 3rd and 4th Streets and cars could be parked off-site at any number of close-in locations including the County parking lot located behind the courthouse. Alternatively, customers could be incentivized to park offsite by opting to receive a \$5 coupon (in lieu of valet service) redeemable at participating businesses (i.e., effectively paying themselves to park).



Crosswalks that contrast in color and texture from the main pavement surface can alert drivers and help slow traffic without changing the street dimensions. These, along with pedestrian warning signals, should be introduced in select locations along U.S. 90A in consultation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

Other partial solutions would be to offer free rickshaw service or scooters at key remote lots, or to operate a free midday shuttle service between peripheral activity/customer centers (i.e., justice and medical centers) and the core Downtown area. Still another option is simply to improve the walking environment Downtown so that the act of walking is seen as less onerous.

An issue related to parking is the need to improve pedestrian movement throughout the entire Downtown area. U.S. 90A bisects Downtown and is a particular barrier for

Recommendation:

→ Introduce street amenities and safety measures throughout the Downtown core to improve the pedestrian experience.

pedestrians. The Downtown Richmond segment of this highway currently carries between 18,000 to 21,000 vehicles per day, traveling at an average of 40 miles per hour, and has only a few controlled, demarcated crosswalks. Introducing painted crosswalks, crosswalk signals, contrasting paving materials/textures and other



intersection design treatments at select locations along the route would help slow traffic and alert drivers to the presence of walkers and cyclists.

The Union Pacific rail line that separates Wessendorf Park from the core Downtown is another pain point for pedestrians where the grade change and the lack of sidewalks make walking a less than inviting experience. New sidewalks would help better connect this area to the core Downtown.

Elsewhere Downtown, the general lack of pedestrian amenities such as benches, planters, accent lighting and crosswalk treatments discourages strolling and lingering, and tells of a car-dominant environment. The City should begin to develop a program of streetscape improvements starting with the core Downtown area and working outward along key corridors. These improvements should be worked into the City's overall capital improvements plan.

DRAFT

Connect Activity Nodes



The Fort Bend County Judicial Center, the OakBend Medical Center, George Park and even Richmond’s twin-city Rosenberg are all Downtown-adjacent hubs of activity that are seemingly disconnected from Downtown Richmond. Although certain transportation, parking and wayfinding improvements can help improve Downtown’s convenience factor and raise awareness, creating stronger linkages will require coordination and direct marketing on the part of the Downtown business community.

Activity Nodes



The greater Olde Town area consists of several discrete sub-areas that should be more strongly linked.



Many communities have addressed this by improving the bike-pedestrian infrastructure between nodes, introducing micro-transit options (e.g., bikeshare and scooters), offering free peak-time shuttle services, promoting Downtown gift card programs, and by introducing employee-direct special promotions.

The City should also overcome its potential reluctance to cooperating with neighboring Rosenberg so that the cities can begin to co-market themselves as a larger regional destination.

Within the Houston Metro region, Richmond's identity is strongly linked with that of Rosenberg. This is reflected in numerous hyphenated road signs along area highways that suggest a twin-city relationship (to say nothing of the fact that the cities also share a common border, river and railroad corridor). Although there is notable ambivalence toward such co-identification among certain City leaders (or skepticism that City leaders will embrace it even though it would benefit the Downtown business community), it must be understood that the cities' collective drawing power is stronger together than alone.

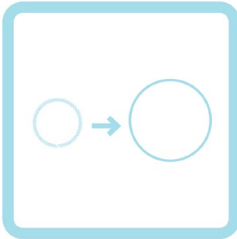
Recommendations:

→ *Brand and market the city as part of a "circuit" of regional attractions centered on the Brazos River.*

→ *Add wayfinding signs in both directions along U.S. 90A and along the Richmond Parkway/Austin Street entry into Downtown. Attractions listed should include: Historic Morton Street, Wessendorf Park, George Park, the Fort Bend County Judicial Center, the Fort Bend County Courthouse, the OakBend Medical Center and the Fort Bend Museum.*



Expand, Define, Diversify



The boundaries that define Richmond’s Downtown are somewhat fuzzy and subject to personal interpretation. This fuzziness is due in part to the fact that the term’s “Olde Town,” “Downtown” and the “Historic District” are sometimes used interchangeably even though they have very different zoning connotations and geographic boundaries. The district’s physical ambiguity, on the other hand, is a symptom of incremental building loss and replacement over the years that has changed, in places, its architectural texture relative to surrounding neighborhoods. A deficit of themed signs and special Downtown streetscape contribute to the district’s lack of physical definition and contrast.

Recommendation:
→ Settle on a single naming convention and “brand” for the combined Olde Town and Downtown areas to distinguish it from its underlying zoning districts (e.g., Downtown, City Center, etc.).

Recommendation:
→ Expand the range of “in town” housing options within the Olde Town/Downtown zoning districts.

For branding purposes, the City should adhere to a consistent nomenclature that identifies the entire area encompassing the Downtown and Olde Town zoning districts as a single, unified place. This should be reinforced with gateway signage and streetscape elements (i.e. accent lighting, decorative street signs, etc.) that differentiate it from surrounding districts. This should be further accentuated by infill development that reinforces the district’s traditional building pattern of street-facing structures that utilize traditional (i.e. pre 1950’s) building shapes and materials.

Adding new infill housing in the greater Olde Town area (in the form well-fitting, well-designed townhouses, small apartment buildings, upper-floor apartments and accessory dwelling units) is essential to making the area more vibrant and business-sustaining. Such housing will also improve off-hours activity levels and the district’s sense of safety. Currently, the City’s UDC allows townhouses and duplexes, but prohibits apartments anywhere in the Olde Town district. Loft apartments are allowed however in the much smaller Downtown zoning district (see the related graphics/examples later in this plan).

Recommendation:
→ Create incentives to convert upper floors of Downtown buildings to loft apartments (\$20,000 per unit, provided that the per-unit construction costs are at least \$50,000 and not more than \$250,000, excluding real estate acquisition costs).

Capitalize on the River



The Brazos River is one of Richmond’s most distinguishing, yet uncelebrated physical features. Its scoured shoreline and brownish appearance, to some, make it less than picturesque while its periodically fast current and history of flooding give it a sense of danger. Yet

in spite of these perceptions, the river and its adjacent parks and open spaces represent Richmond’s – and Fort Bend County’s – most recognizable geographic feature and “place-identifier.” Figuring out ways to better incorporate the river into the life and economy of the city will be a key aspect of Downtown’s future success. The river also figures strongly in citizens’ desire to have a centrally located public gathering area and Downtown destination feature.



Greenville, South Carolina, has become one of the most desirable small cities in the U.S., in part, through its embrace of its previously ignored riverfront.

Recommendation:

→ *Create a linked system of public spaces along the river.*

Conceiving how to use the river means accepting it for what it is and not for what it is not. Because of its variable flow and depth, the river does not lend itself to the type of engineered shoreline riverwalks seen in other cities. The river also has limited utility for active recreation such as fishing and paddle sports. Instead, the river is more of an ambient feature intended more to be looked at and heard. The Downtown segment should be a backdrop for community celebrations and an important link in a larger recreational trail system spanning the region (**Brazos River Recreation Master Plan**).

Ways in which the City can incorporate the river into Downtown include the installation of public overlooks, reveals and trail segments along the bluffs either through direct public acquisition/investment or in cooperation with incentivized private developers. The City should also explore building a dedicated pedestrian crossing to connect the west and east banks of the river (such as the Union Pacific truss bridge) and work with TxDOT to make sure that any proposed highway bridge reconstructions or retrofits include protected bicycle/pedestrian facilities and gateway architectural flourishes. Other ways the City can work to amenitize the river include various river lighting schemes (including bridge lighting and uplighting).

Recommendation:

→ *Proactively engage with the Union Pacific Railroad on the terms and timing of a potential transfer of ownership of the historic truss bridge.*

Opportunities and Potentials

Downtown Richmond’s assets, including its historic buildings, County facilities and riverfront, present an exceptionally strong base to build from. Key opportunities include:



- Making stronger connections to and between the area’s main activity centers;
- Opening up the riverfront for more active use;
- Adding select amenities such as enhanced shopping and public space;
- Embellishing Downtown’s gateways and streets with new streetscape features; and
- Expanding both the footprint and activity sphere of the historic commercial core through infill development and enhancements to Wessendorf Park.

The pending reconstruction of 2nd Street into a de-facto levee will provide a level of flood protection for the previously unprotected north end of Downtown thus further enhancing this area’s redevelopment potential.

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District-Wide Potentials

Opportunities and Potentials



Composite of proposed projects and improvements for the immediate Downtown area.

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Calhoun Street Brownstones

Some critical public investments will be essential to unlocking these opportunities. Of these, the impending regrading and reconstruction of 2nd Street to provide flood protection to the core Downtown offers the potential to develop much of the vacant land between the railroad tracks and Calhoun Street and represents Richmond’s most immediate and potentially impactful redevelopment opportunity. This area is best suited to new residential lofts or townhouses with shared public-private parking at grade level. The City’s current ownership of a few of these close-in blocks provides a major opportunity to dictate the design quality of any new project here while also preserving opportunities for shared-use public parking by retaining a public parking easement and essentially selling off the properties’ “air rights.”



Example of “air rights” development on publicly-owned site with shared public/private parking at ground level. Podium-style construction also protects residential units from flood risk.



Examples of infill housing types appropriate for Olde Town Richmond and environs.

The Triangle

Although it has great visibility, the wedge of land formed where U.S. 90A splits into a one-way pair has marginal development utility due to the shape of the site and its awkward access to/from the highway. On the other hand, transforming this site into an ornamental public space potentially with a fountain, obelisk, statuary or other public art would strongly mark arrival into the heart of Downtown and provide a needed pedestrian island in the middle of the busy U.S. 90A right-of-way. This would help ease pedestrian movements between the courthouse area and the core Downtown by making the walk safer and more inviting. A full traffic circle at this location, designed to slow traffic and to reduce collisions, may also be worthy of further study.



The U.S. 90A triangle could be redeveloped into an ornamental gateway feature cum-traffic island.

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Trestle Pedestrian Bridge and Improved Wessendorf Park

The Union Pacific truss bridge over the Brazos River is one of Richmond's most distinguishing local landmarks, used prominently in the City and DCR logos. The bridge is due to be replaced in coming years with a sister rail bridge built alongside the older span. Union Pacific has made overtures for the City to take ownership of the existing bridge once its replacement is built. This potential donation presents the City with a unique opportunity to create a special Downtown attraction that highlights Richmond's riverside location while expanding its park and trail infrastructure.

Examples abound from throughout the world of how old, abandoned industrial infrastructure such as the rail bridge have been transformed into celebrated public spaces. Some cities have repurposed these types of facilities for public parks and event spaces. For Richmond, the bridge offers an opportunity to create a landmark destination to draw more visitors to its Downtown. It would serve as much as an extension of Wessendorf Park as it would a bridge in the usual sense. It would also connect the underdeveloped east bank of the river to Downtown and potentially spur development there. The bridge could also be used as a staging area for special community events such as a semi-annual "Bridge Fest" with music and food ([see the related graphics/examples later in this plan](#)).

Meanwhile, nearby Wessendorf Park, like the Brazos River, remains one of Olde Town's most underappreciated and underused assets. Adding new special features such as a Japanese Garden, a rose garden, exercise stations or an amphitheater along with new programming would help activate the park and draw more visitors to the district. Turning the park into a more celebrated and actively used public space would also help counter many residents' perception that Downtown lacks any family-friendly amenities.

River Bluff Trails

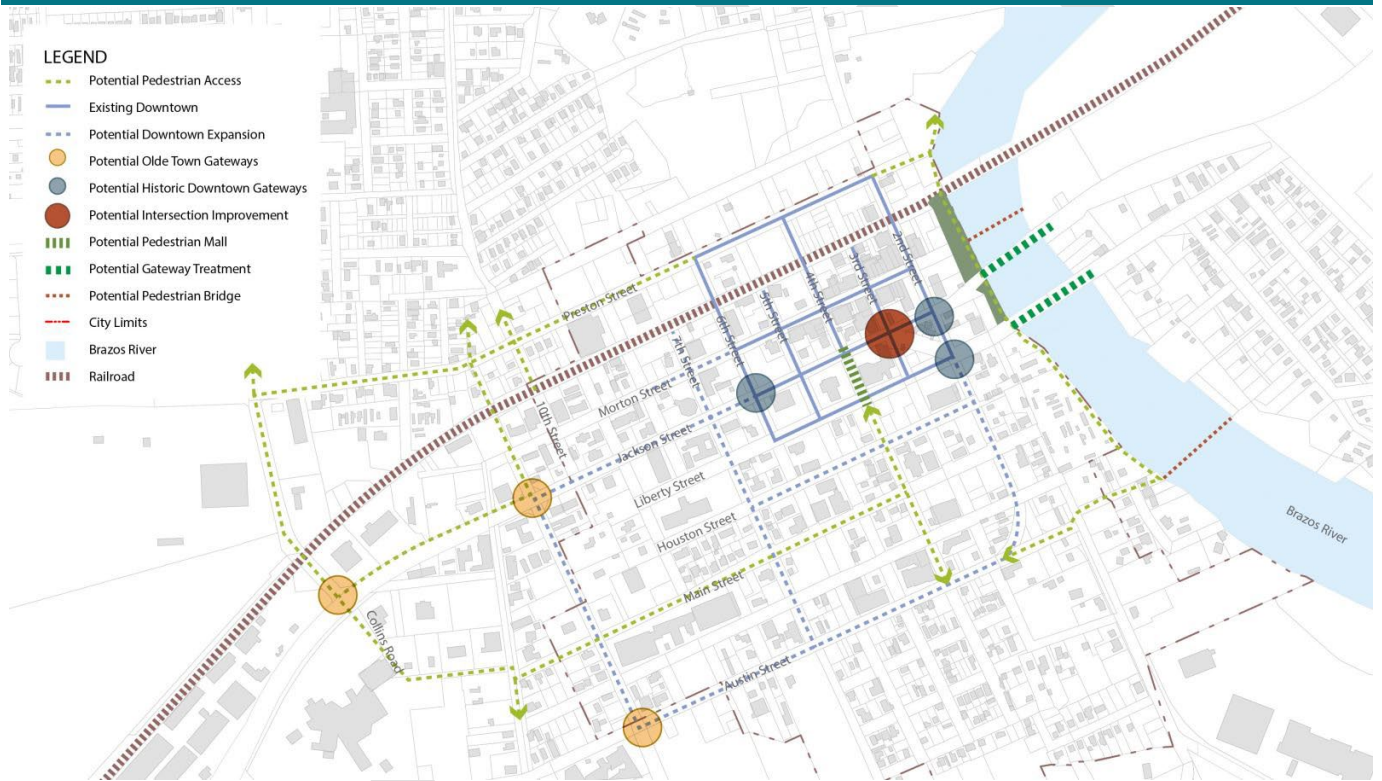
Improving Richmond's bike and pedestrian network, along with creating more useable public space in or near Downtown, were both cited as needs in the interviews and community survey accompanying this plan. Meanwhile, significant swaths of river-adjacent property are potentially ripe for redevelopment in coming years. Going forward, the City should make efforts to incentivize and/or require public access easements along the river bluffs as redevelopment occurs incrementally over time. These trail segments could be woven into a larger system of riverside linear parks and reflected in future versions of Richmond's [Trail Master Plan](#).

Downtown Beautification and Gateway Landmarking

Despite the strong crossover features that demarcate Downtown Richmond (i.e., river, bridges, historic buildings, etc.), the arrival into Downtown is not well pronounced in any direction. This suggests to drivers that Downtown is a place to pass through, not arrive in. Opportunities to signal arrival (in ways other than simple “welcome to” signs) exist at several locations, particularly along U.S. 90A. These include the Brazos River bridges, the “triangle,” and the rail overpass and the silos and other structures on the west. The latter, in particular, could be used as a canvas for public art. Looking to the future, the City should work with TxDOT to assure that the redesigns of the river bridges on U.S. 90A feature some architectural gateway accents as part of their eventual retrofit or reconstruction. Such “upgrades” are often included as part of a cost-sharing agreement negotiated between state Departments of Transportation and local governments and frequently involve some amount of local tax increment financing contribution.



Key Pathways, Gateways and Intersections

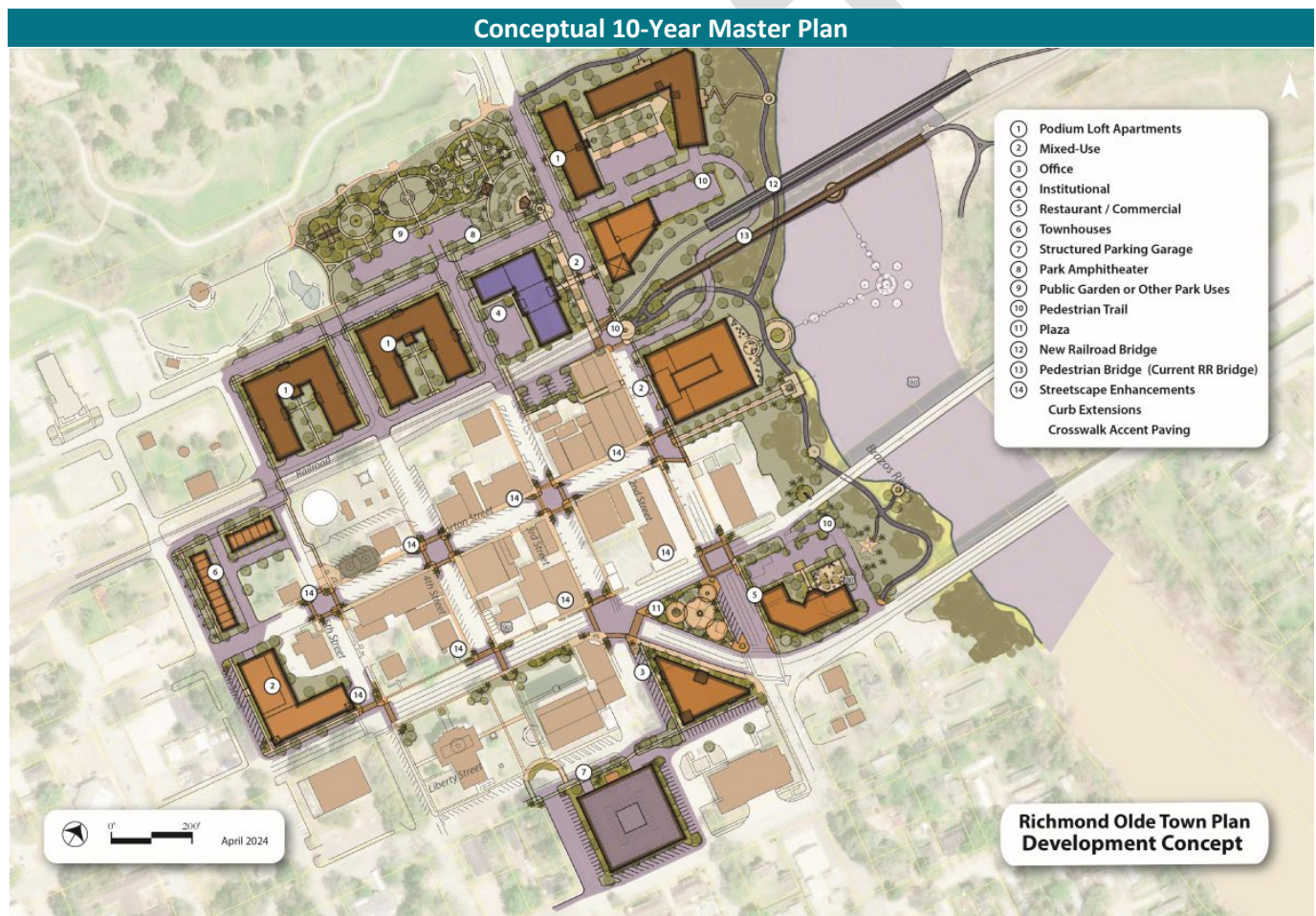


The areas highlighted are worthy of special design treatment due to their high visibility and district-defining potential.

PART III: 10-YEAR VISION

10-Year Vision

The schematic below comprises the 10-year conceptual physical development plan for the core Downtown area. The plan as a whole is conceptual in nature and is intended to convey a preferred direction, but not an absolute direction, for future development and redevelopment. The plan attempts to visualize several of the latent opportunities described earlier. The emphasis is on: mixed-use infill development, pedestrian amenities and connections, riverfront orientation, shared public-private parking, accented gateways, and unifying the north and south portions of the district across U.S. 90A.



Conceptual 10-year master plan for the Downtown core. Realizing the vision will involve equal parts property-owner participation and direct public investment.

Streetscape Sketch



Looking west from the corner of U.S. 90A and 2nd Street.

PART IV: IMPLEMENTATION

Effective Redevelopment Planning

Effective redevelopment planning requires focus on people and programs as well “bricks and mortar.” It involves both “3P’s” (public-private partnerships), as well as the three “P’s”: projects, programs and policies. As stated in this plan’s introduction, it is equal parts physical design plan, economic development strategy and public policy framework. It also requires financial resources, staffing capacity, business and philanthropic community involvement and political leadership. Perhaps most importantly, it requires the achievement of some early wins to help build confidence among project stakeholders and to build momentum for projects requiring sustained efforts over several years.

To help break down the process into manageable pieces, this plan suggests an implementation framework ranging from immediate (easier, less costly) to long-term (harder, more costly) priorities. The latter, in particular, are grounded in the understanding that the City may need to build up both its financial and staff capacities to undertake these initiatives effectively.

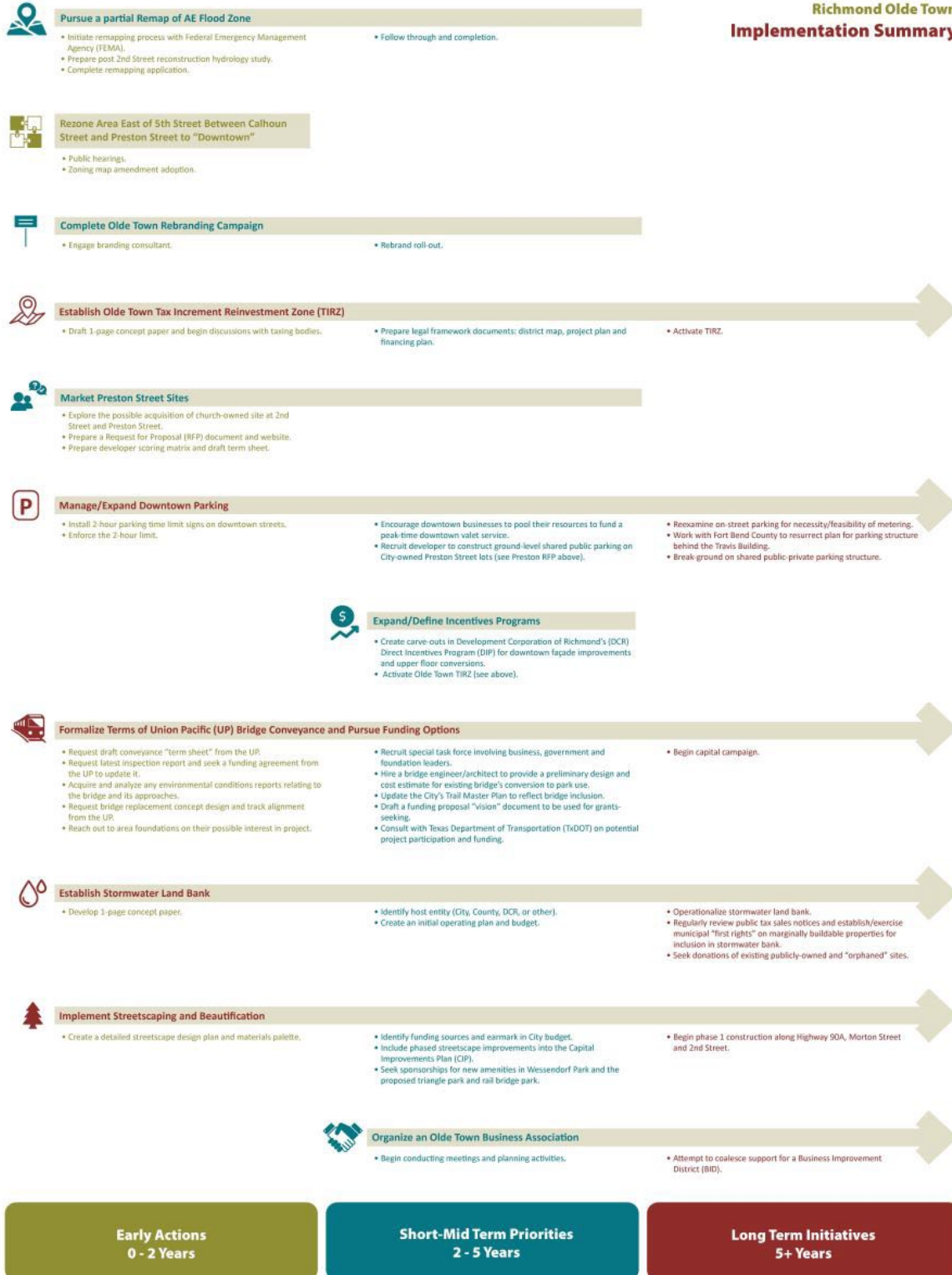
Implementation Summary

Below is a summary of the implementation strategy. The programs have been placed into three timeframes. Further details on each program can be found in the following sections:

- **Early Action Projects (0-2 Years):**
 - Pursue a partial Remap of AE Flood Zone
 - Establish a Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)
 - Rezone Area East of 5th Street Between Calhoun Street and Preston Street to “Downtown”
- **Short-Term Priorities (2-5 Years):**
 - Market Preston Street Sites
 - Pursue Public Art/Sign Easements
 - Expand/Define Incentives Programs
 - Manage/Expand Downtown Parking
 - Formalize Terms of Union Pacific (UP) Bridge Conveyance and Pursue Funding Options
 - Establish Stormwater Land Bank
 - Implement Streetscaping and Beautification
- **Longer-Term Projects (5+ Years):**
 - Establish Downtown Business Improvement District (BID)
 - Pursue National Register of Historic Places Designation
 - Maintain Membership in Main Street America or International Downtown Association
 - Explore River Bluff Redevelopment

Implementation Summary

Richmond Olde Town Implementation Summary



NOTE: If viewing the above graphic online, click on the graphic to view a larger-scale PDF version



Early Action Projects (0-2 Years)

Pursue a Partial Remap of AE Flood Zone

The raising and reconstruction of 2nd Street presents an opportunity to initiate a request to FEMA to remap a portion of Downtown out of the AE flood zone. This is important in that a re-map will enhance the attractiveness and value of the area north of the Union Pacific railroad and also reduce insurance and mitigation costs associated with new construction. The process begins with filing a Letter of Map Amendment with FEMA. The request may need to be accompanied by a post-construction hydrological study and survey prepared by a certified hydrologist.

Implementation Measures:

- Contact area FEMA representative to advise on the remapping process.
- Prepare post construction hydrological study to include with remapping application.

Establish a Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)

Newly proposed redevelopment projects such as the old Downtown fire station, the pending retail development at the corner of Liberty Avenue and Richmond Parkway, and the prospective redevelopment of the vacant City-owned blocks north of the Union Pacific tracks, offer a narrow window of opportunity to capture new incremental tax revenue to help fund Downtown improvements. This opportunity diminishes or expires as the new projects hit the City’s tax rolls.

Working with Fort Bend County, the City should expeditiously move to establish the legal framework to create its first ever TIRZ district focused on Downtown. The district should cover the area generally between Preston Street, North 5th Street, Houston Street and the Brazos River. The creation of the TIRZ will help accumulate public improvement funds for the district and aid the City’s developer recruitment efforts. The funds can be used for things such as: new beautification projects, new sidewalks along Preston Street, improvements to Wessendorf Park, or public parking facilities including those that are incorporated into private developments.

Implementation Measures:

- Begin initial discussions with the City Commission and area taxing bodies about creating a new Downtown-area TIRZ.
- Initiate the TIRZ process beginning with preparing drafts of: a preliminary financing plan, district boundary map, and preliminary project plan followed by a public hearing and formation of a TIRZ board.



*Rezone Area East of 5th Street Between
Calhoun Street and Preston Street to "Downtown"*

This minor rezoning would allow mixed-use and stand-alone loft style apartment buildings on the City-owned parcels along Preston Street (this will be key to infusing more life into the core Downtown and developing shared-use parking). Alternatively, the City could amend the Olde Town district to conditionally allow smaller apartment buildings of 20 or fewer units.

Implementation Measures:

→ Amend zoning map and ordinance.

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Short-Term Priorities (2-5 Years)

Market Preston Street Sites

Using the [vision plan](#) as a marketing tool, the City should issue a request for proposals (RFP) for the City-owned blocks along the south side of Preston Street. The RFP should prominently mention the 2nd Street reconstruction project and the proposed remapping of these sites out of the AE flood hazard area. The RFP should also highlight Downtown's key assets, market opportunities, community demographics, incentives and other plan highlights such as the proposed Union Pacific rail bridge park. A condensed print version should be downloadable from the City and DCR websites and circulated among real estate organizations such as [ULI-Houston](#) and [CCIM](#).

The RFP should clearly spell out the City's expectations for new development on these blocks in terms of: land use (mixed-use and/or residential townhouses or lofts), building type/design, construction costs, completion timeframes and the need to incorporate publicly accessible (shared) on-site parking. It should also clearly state the developer selection criteria including: experience, references, project portfolio, credit history and willingness to enter into a cooperative agreement with the City to provide the publicly accessible parking within the development.

The process should start with getting a current appraisal of the sites to determine their fair market value. The RFP should allude to the City's willingness to discount the land price and/or provide other incentives to offset the costs of providing the excess parking based on financial need (e.g., as determined by a review of the project budget and pro forma).

Implementation Measures:

- *Prepare RFP document and website.*
- *Prepare developer scoring matrix and draft term sheet.*
- *Issue RFP to area real estate trade publications and on social media.*
- *Prepare draft development agreement.*

Pursue Public Art/Sign Easements

The presence of the west-side rail bridge and silo structures along U.S. 90A offer a key opportunity to accentuate the entry into Olde Town from the west. Art and sign installations on these “open canvases” would help define Richmond’s western gateway and soften its existing industrial aesthetics. Large scale murals along with the potential uplighting of the rail bridge could turn this area from an eyesore to an attraction.

The City should explore this opportunity by seeking permission (in the form of façade easements) on these surfaces with their respective owners with a view to commissioning muralists to install public art on them. The City may need to attempt to either purchase or assign a value to these easements (i.e., through an appraisal that can used for a tax write-off) to provide inducements to the owners.

Implementation Measures:

→ Approach property owners and secure use agreements/ façade easements.

→ Appoint a design “jury” and issue artist RFP or conduct design competition.



With some artistic touches, the west-side silo structures along U.S. 90A could serve as a welcoming attraction from the west.



Expand/Define Incentives Programs

Although it periodically incents business development and redevelopment activity through its Direct Incentives program, the [Development Corporation of Richmond](#) (DCR) currently does not promote any special local grant or loan programs on its website. Incentives are generally provided on an informal, ad hoc basis depending upon the project and funding need/availability at hand.

Although this practice assures maximum flexibility in how the DCR deploys its funds, the lack of specific investment criteria, project eligibility and award maximums (i.e., “defined benefits”) does not assure prospective applicants that any specific project (or project type) will be funded. The program’s specific mention of jobs and wages may also discourage potential Downtown investors whose projects will likely involve retail and housing. These factors, combined, may cause prospective Downtown investors “shopping” multiple communities to overlook Richmond in favor of communities whose incentives criteria and award amounts are more clearly spelled out and more clearly redevelopment-focused.

Moving forward, the DCR should establish clearer program guidelines and sub-categories within its Direct Investment program. These should include: (1) a special building (i.e., façade) matching grant/loan program specifically for Downtown redevelopment projects, and (2) a revolving (subordinate) loan program designed to be paired with conventional debt and equity (the latter potentially modeled after the [SBA 504 program](#) but with less emphasis on jobs, wages and business creation).

Implementation Measure:

→ Create special carve-outs in the Direct Incentives program specifically for building improvement grants and loans and upper-floor apartment conversions.



Manage/Expand Downtown Parking

The perceived lack of available peak-time Downtown parking was a major concern registered by many people consulted for this plan. This, despite the fact that the general supply of parking appears to be more than adequate to serve the amount of available Downtown commercial space. The problem appears to be less about the supply of parking than how that supply is managed, along with the availability of overflow parking for special events or to meet temporary peak-time needs. (It may also have to do with unrealistic expectations by patrons on how convenient this parking ought to be in a traditional downtown environment.) Still, as Downtown's popularity continues and new development occurs, the need to both expand and optimize existing parking will remain a pressing concern.

An immediate action is to post and enforce time limits for parking on select Downtown streets, along with having business owners require their employees to park in remote locations away from the Downtown core during business hours. This will help minimize the all-day "squatting" that reportedly occurs by some Downtown employees and property owners. At some point in the future, the City may choose to meter its Downtown parking spaces; however, that course is not recommended until Downtown's popularity, as measured by the number of active storefronts, residents, and foot traffic, reaches a more critical level.

To help expand the supply of parking, the City should make sure to retain public parking easements on the publicly owned sites along Preston Street as part of any new development projects (and in consideration for granting future development rights). This means that developers of these sites would be required to build and maintain a dedicated level of public parking as a condition of sale and usually in exchange for a significant discount on the price of the land and/or receiving TIRZ proceeds.

There are many ways to legally structure this, the most common being that developers are granted the "air rights" to develop a site's airspace while the surface or ground level is reserved for permanent public parking. This can be done via an outright sale of the property (City is granted parking easement or perpetual \$1 ground lease) or just the air rights (City continues to own and maintain a parking "condo"), or via a master/ground lease structure that gives the developer 50+ years of fixed-fee use rights.

With respect to the shared-use parking, the development should include enough parking to accommodate both residents and transient parkers on a one-for-one basis. This would be negotiated via a development agreement that stipulates a project-specific minimum parking requirement for the residential component (note that more typical zoning-based minimum parking requirements are not recommended for Downtown due to the additional costs they impose and the deadening effect they create when manifested in large surface lots).

Implementation Measures:

- *Post and enforce 2-hour maximum parking limits along Morton, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Streets.*
- *Work with Fort Bend County to resurrect plan for parking structure behind the Travis Building.*
- *Encourage Downtown businesses (particularly restaurants) to pool their resources to fund a peak-time, shared valet service.*
- *Issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for City-owned Preston Street blocks with required provision of public parking.*
- *Work with Downtown area churches to accommodate overflow public parking for non-Sunday special events.*
- *Explore future free daytime shuttle service between Downtown, the Judicial Center and OakBend Medical Center.*
- *Examine/design opportunities to introduce angled parking as part of 2nd Street reconstruction.*

Formalize Terms of Union Pacific (UP) Bridge Conveyance and Pursue Funding Options

The potential donation of the landmark Union Pacific (UP) truss bridge is a rare opportunity to create a unique destination feature in Downtown Richmond. Once acquired, the bridge should be fully integrated into Richmond’s parks and trails system and be used to stage special public events (see the [Steel Bridge Festival](#) in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, and [Rock Island Bridge](#) in Kansas City).



Source: Flying Truss KC



Source: Flying Truss KC



Source: John Everitt | OnMilwaukee.com

Examples of abandoned rail infrastructure repurposed as urban park space.

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The City should work proactively with the UP to begin to formalize the terms and timing of the donation, conduct basic due diligence, and begin to line up funding commitments for the bridge's eventual restoration and ongoing maintenance. Items to consider include: inspections, repair and maintenance costs, the location/alignment/design of the replacement bridge and track, and environmental and operational liabilities and indemnifications. The City should also use this opportunity to discuss other issues with the UP such as “quiet zone” operations.

Potential resources and funding options include:

- The [Rails to Trails Conservancy](#).
- The [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s Recreational Trails Program](#) (funded by the [US Department of Transportation](#) and recently expanded via the [2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill](#)).
- Area non-profits, family offices and foundations including the [Henderson-Wessendorf](#) and [George Foundations](#).

Implementation Measures:

- Request a draft conveyance “term sheet” from the UP.
- Request latest inspection report and seek a funding agreement from the UP to update it.
- Acquire and analyze any environmental/conditions reports relating to the bridge and its approaches.
- Request bridge replacement concept design and track alignment from the UP.
- Hire a bridge engineer/architect to provide a preliminary design and cost estimate for existing bridge’s conversion to park use.
- Update the City’s Trail Master Plan to reflect bridge inclusion.
- Draft a funding proposal “vision” document to be used for grants-seeking.
- Consult with TxDOT on potential project participation and funding.
- Reach out to area foundations on their possible interest in project.

Establish Stormwater Land Bank

The region’s increasingly intensive rainfalls (and consequent stormwater management regulations that require not more than 50% lot coverage) have essentially rendered many smaller city lots unbuildable. Particularly affected Downtown-area properties include Freemans Town and the neighborhoods of the near north side.

This situation thwarts small lot residential infill development and redevelopment in these neighborhoods – especially of the type that would add to Richmond’s affordable housing stock. On the other hand, instituting a stormwater management land bank – whereby individual lots in the affected areas are opportunistically acquired by the City either by voluntary sale or through tax reversion, and then permanently held or deed-restricted for stormwater collection – could relieve individual property owners from having to provide their own on-site detention (i.e., in the form of tightly restricted lot coverage).

This type of “checkerboard” or areawide detention could allow many of these properties to accommodate new or expanded cottage homes without worsening the risk of flooding. The vacant lots could also double as community gardens. Another option would be to increase the lot coverage maximum for property owners who install rainwater collection systems such as rain gardens or backyard cisterns that can collect an offsetting amount of stormwater. Yet another option would be to institute a stormwater credit system whereby property owners can exceed the maximum lot coverage requirement if they can acquire and permanently deed restrict an offsetting amount of nearby vacant land (provided that it is not in a floodway and is left permanently vacant). In either case, this is a situation where a range of options should be explored and/or made available to help expand housing options in or near Downtown and to restore the buildability and economic value of many of the city’s small residential lots.

Implementation Measures:

→ Create an initial operating plan and budget for a public land bank.

→ Regularly review public tax sales notices and establish/exercise municipal “first rights” on marginally buildable properties for inclusion in stormwater bank.

Implement Streetscaping and Beautification

Richmond's Downtown core is due for a cosmetic makeover. A basic package of decorative streetlights, crosswalk accents and street furniture is needed to help set off Downtown's historic buildings and to signal the City's financial commitment to the district. It is important that these installations adhere to a consistent and unifying design palette and avoid the chaotic patchwork that sometimes results when they are installed incrementally over longer periods of time or are left to the whims of private developers.

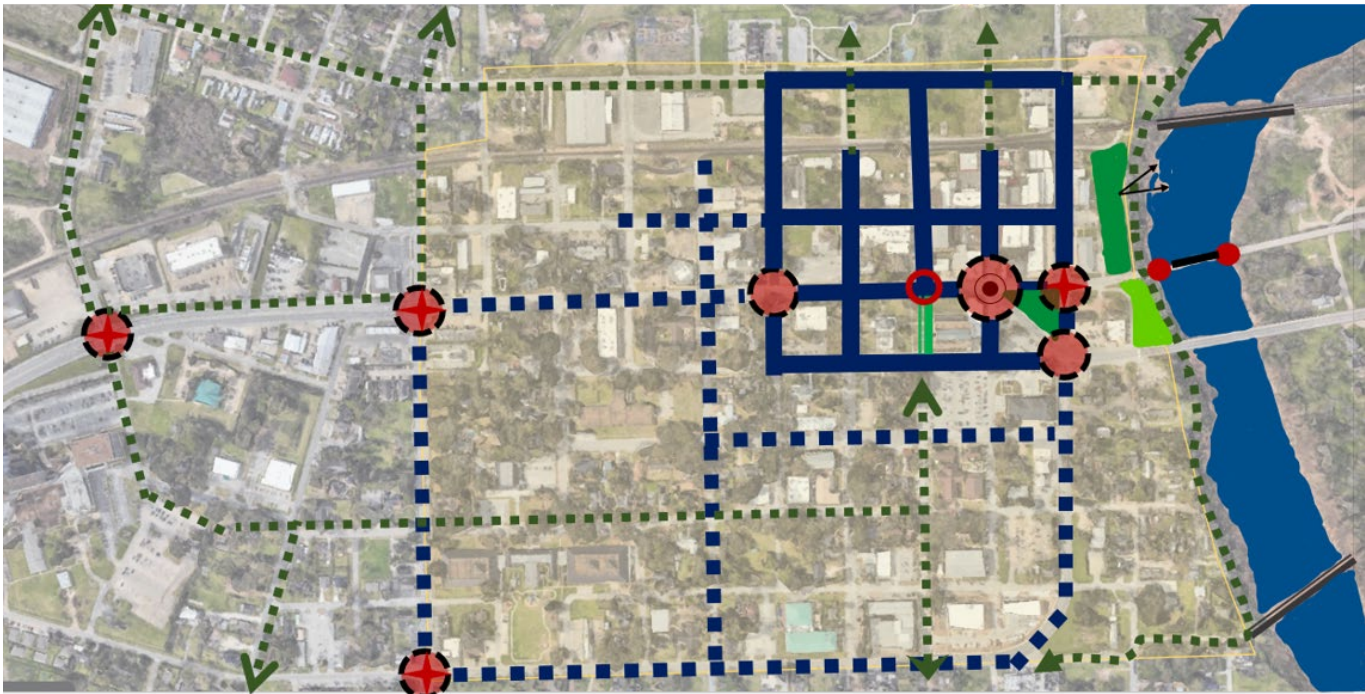
Enhancements to Wessendorf Park are also recommended along with the addition of new parklets along the river and at the triangle formed at the U.S. 90A split to make the area greener and more walkable. These improvements need to be incorporated into the City's capital projects planning, with the work coordinated with other City projects and private development to the extent possible. The City should also begin the long process of incrementally burying the district's many overhead utility lines in coordination with other major street and utility work.

Implementation Measures:

- *Seek sponsorships for new amenities in Wessendorf Park and the proposed triangle park and rail bridge park.*
- *Establish a new Downtown TIRZ as a funding mechanism.*
- *Create a detailed streetscape design plan and materials palette.*
- *Include phased streetscape improvements in the City's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).*

Public Improvements

- Public Improvements**
-  Primary streetscape
 -  Secondary streetscape
 -  Pedestrian bridge
 -  Bike-ped route
 -  Gateway treatment



Proposed public beautification sites and corridors.



Longer-Term Projects (5+ Years)

Establish Downtown Business Improvement District (BID)

As the Downtown business community expands and stabilizes in coming years, efforts to organize the businesses into a functioning dues-paying business association should be pursued. As the group coalesces over time, taking a possible further step to create a formal Business Improvement District (BID) should also be explored. BID formation typically involves a majority of property owners(hip) voting to incur an additional special assessment, the revenue from which will be used exclusively within the Downtown area to fund special initiatives such as beautification, cooperative valet service and events.

Such a dedicated funding source, above and beyond the City's regular district allocation, would help area merchants take their "placemaking" efforts to a new level including possible professional promotion and management. Additionally, since the special assessment would apply on a pro-rata basis to all properties based on their size, and regardless of whether a particular property owner voted for the additional assessment, it may provide the impetus for some marginally-used properties to be sold or converted into higher and better retail uses.

Implementation Measures:

- *Organize Downtown business owners into a functioning association with an elected board of directors and secretary, etc.*
- *Collect and disseminate BID information materials explaining the BID process, costs and benefits, etc.*
- *Establish proposed assessment amount and BID boundary.*
- *Conduct public meetings to solicit feedback.*

Pursue National Register of Historic Places Designation

The City's existing historic district and commission structure provides a ready platform to explore the possibility of future National Register listing and the financial benefits that come with it. These benefits come principally in the form of a generous 20% federal tax credit and grants for qualified rehabilitations of "contributing" buildings within the district. The tax credits can be used either to offset an owner's personal tax liability or sold at a discount for cash. These additional resources can sometimes make the difference between a project that is financially infeasible and one that is. Another benefit is potential relief from certain building and fire codes when it comes to rehabilitation. And despite misconceptions that buildings within such a district are sacrosanct and cannot be demolished, National Register listings are far more incentives-based than penalty-laden (the only penalty is that listed properties are essentially blacklisted from receiving any form of federal subsidy if they are ever demolished).

To initiate the process, the City should consult (and educate) affected property owners and enlist the [Richmond Historical Commission](#) as well as the [Texas Historical Commission](#) in the process. Typically, the City will need to hire a qualified consultant to conduct a historic resources inventory to determine if there is enough of a concentration of significant historic properties to qualify for listing, as well as the appropriate geographic boundary to include in the nomination (which may differ slightly from the City's existing historic district overlay zone).

Maintain Membership in Main Street America or International Downtown Association

Maintaining a membership in any one of several national downtown networks is a good way to help the City stay abreast of evolving trends and tools relevant to the Downtown area. The national [Main Street Program](#) is the most recognized membership organization serving small downtowns in the U.S. Its holistic 4-point doctrine emphasizes: design, economic vitality, promotion and organization under the leadership of a dedicated executive director and supported by individual subject-area committees. However, getting the most out of membership requires a motivated and engaged set of Downtown stakeholders willing to devote time and resources in each of the four subject areas over a period of several years. (Some Main Street communities have experienced difficulty sustaining interest in the program after the first few years due to "meeting fatigue.") The [IDA](#) is a membership organization dedicated to sharing resources and best practices to help energize downtowns across the country. Other organizations such as [Strong Towns](#) provide access to a range of information sources and advisory services from throughout its extended network.

Implementation Measure:

→ Fund a subcommittee of the DCR and Downtown business community to attend one or more national conferences of the mentioned organizations and make a recommendation for membership to the full DCR board.

Explore River Bluff Redevelopment

The City and the DCR should continuously explore opportunities to acquire available, buildable riverfront property in the immediate Downtown area as funding allows and as sites become available. Selective opportunities may exist in the area south of U.S. 90A and along the east bank of the river north of the highway. Gaining control of these properties can help accelerate their conversion into new public access trails and higher quality development that takes advantage of river and bridge views.

Implementation Measures:

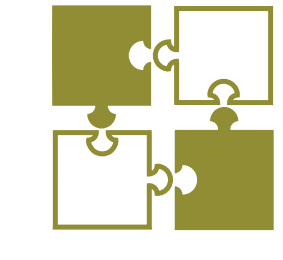
→ Create a dedicated/revolving site acquisition fund with yearly \$100,000 contributions from the DCR and/or the City general fund.

→ Institute a policy requiring the dedication of a public access easement along the west bluff of the Brazos River as a condition of receiving local incentives or as part of any Planned Development approval or land replat.



Pursue a partial Remap of AE Flood Zone

- Initiate remapping process with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Prepare post 2nd Street reconstruction hydrology study.
- Complete remapping application.
- Follow through and completion.



Rezone Area East of 5th Street Between Calhoun Street and Preston Street to “Downtown”

- Public hearings.
- Zoning map amendment adoption.



Complete Olde Town Rebranding Campaign

- Engage branding consultant.
- Rebrand roll-out.



Establish Olde Town Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)

- Draft 1-page concept paper and begin discussions with taxing bodies.
- Prepare legal framework documents: district map, project plan and financing plan.
- Activate TIRZ.



Market Preston Street Sites

- Explore the possible acquisition of church-owned site at 2nd Street and Preston Street.
- Prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) document and website.
- Prepare developer scoring matrix and draft term sheet.



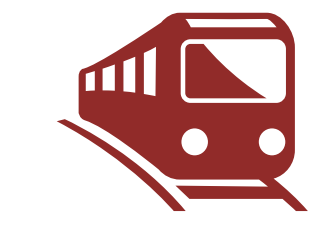
Manage/Expand Downtown Parking

- Install 2-hour parking time limit signs on downtown streets.
- Enforce the 2-hour limit.
- Encourage downtown businesses to pool their resources to fund a peak-time downtown valet service.
- Recruit developer to construct ground-level shared public parking on City-owned Preston Street lots (see Preston RFP above).
- Reexamine on-street parking for necessity/feasibility of metering.
- Work with Fort Bend County to resurrect plan for parking structure behind the Travis Building.
- Break-ground on shared public-private parking structure.



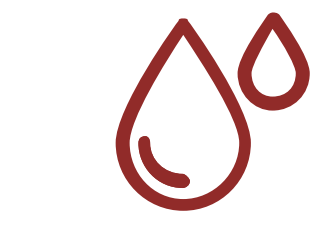
Expand/Define Incentives Programs

- Create carve-outs in Development Corporation of Richmond’s (DCR) Direct Incentives Program (DIP) for downtown façade improvements and upper floor conversions.
- Activate Olde Town TIRZ (see above).



Formalize Terms of Union Pacific (UP) Bridge Conveyance and Pursue Funding Options

- Request draft conveyance “term sheet” from the UP.
- Request latest inspection report and seek a funding agreement from the UP to update it.
- Acquire and analyze any environmental conditions reports relating to the bridge and its approaches.
- Request bridge replacement concept design and track alignment from the UP.
- Reach out to area foundations on their possible interest in project.
- Recruit special task force involving business, government and foundation leaders.
- Hire a bridge engineer/architect to provide a preliminary design and cost estimate for existing bridge’s conversion to park use.
- Update the City’s Trail Master Plan to reflect bridge inclusion.
- Draft a funding proposal “vision” document to be used for grants-seeking.
- Consult with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) on potential project participation and funding.
- Begin capital campaign.



Establish Stormwater Land Bank

- Develop 1-page concept paper.
- Identify host entity (City, County, DCR, or other).
- Create an initial operating plan and budget.
- Operationalize stormwater land bank.
- Regularly review public tax sales notices and establish/exercise municipal “first rights” on marginally buildable properties for inclusion in stormwater bank.
- Seek donations of existing publicly-owned and “orphaned” sites.



Implement Streetscaping and Beautification

- Create a detailed streetscape design plan and materials palette.
- Identify funding sources and earmark in City budget.
- Include phased streetscape improvements into the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).
- Seek sponsorships for new amenities in Wessendorf Park and the proposed triangle park and rail bridge park.
- Begin phase 1 construction along Highway 90A, Morton Street and 2nd Street.



Organize an Olde Town Business Association

- Begin conducting meetings and planning activities.
- Attempt to coalesce support for a Business Improvement District (BID).

Early Actions
0 - 2 Years

Short-Mid Term Priorities
2 - 5 Years

Long Term Initiatives
5+ Years



City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Special Scheduled City Commission Meeting

600 Morton Street

Richmond, Texas 77469

Monday, June 24, 2024 at 4:30 P.M.

A8. Adjournment.

Any item on this posted agenda may be discussed in Executive Session provided it is within one of the permitted categories under Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.