



RICHMOND RISING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Steering Committee Meeting #5 | Summary

August 13, 2019

MEETING OVERVIEW

This steering committee meeting was unique in that the sub-area stakeholder group was invited to attend because the meeting focused on the undeveloped land on U.S. 27. As a part of the comprehensive plan update, there will be a sub-area plan that explores development alternatives for the overall site. The purpose of the meeting was to review three different site concepts and provide feedback on the desired scale and character of the future development. In addition to the project team and a few city staff members, there were 16 individuals in attendance that participated in the discussion and review of the site concepts. Due to the invitation list, and the attendance of multiple elected officials, this steering committee meeting was advertised as a public meeting. The meeting kicked off with a quick introduction and then a presentation of the initial findings from the site conditions analysis.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

Attendees were sitting at a table with 3-5 other members for the small group activities. The first activity consisted of a worksheet that asked each person what they liked, disliked, and what was missing for each concept. The second activity was a visual preference survey for the desired scale of the development. Visual preference surveys allow participants to vote for or against a particular photo based on its appearance. In this case, scale focuses on things such as size of building, site layout, setbacks, and density. The third activity was a visual preference survey for the character or style of the development. These photos were focused on things like architectural details, overall style, and building materials. Each visual preference survey exercise documented a range of development options and material stylings. The following section outlines the feedback received for each concept. The visual preference survey results are shown on the following pages.

Concept 1- Life by the River

Living by the river has always been an appealing concept, and with an interest to maximize riverfront development, what better use than to bring people closer to it. Providing apartments and assisted living facilities within this area of Richmond will connect people to the established, natural environment while still providing the necessary amenities for everyday living. Commercial uses will be promoted along Chester Boulevard with the intent of encouraging future growth to support an influx of new residents, and further meet the needs of the existing population.

What do you like?

- Multiple responders praised the balance of commercial and residential. There was strong support for the preservation of woodland/greenspace and the creation of a trail system. Stakeholders seemed happy to see *multiple* multi-family developments, and a few support the inclusion of assisted living facilities.



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What do you dislike?

- 1/3 of respondents did not answer this question. Comments were strongly against the inclusion of assisted living facilities, and voiced concerns over connecting to Freeman Park due to facility maintenance. A few would like to see the commercial turned into mixed-use, and the development footprint increased.

What is missing?

- Stakeholders wish to see the inclusion of apartment amenities such as a pool, fitness center, and clubhouse. Many do not feel this concept is aimed at young professionals, and that trails need dedicated connectivity to the City as a whole.

Concept 2- Whitewater Destination

To really draw in new visitors and stimulate economic growth, a high-profile destination is needed within the city of Richmond. By creating an anchor within the city, adjacent businesses have a better chance to thrive, and an increase in revenue will help further the necessary improvements within the city overall. With a view of the river and the existing dynamics of the site, an opportunity presents itself to draw in a high-profile use that can utilize and enhance the adjacent views and encourage further development within the undeveloped site.

What do you like?

- There was popular support for the implementation of riverfront enhancements, both on site and within Freeman Park. A few comments supported the concept of a casino as a regional asset. Overall, participants supported the idea of this site including a regional destination.

What do you dislike?

- The Flex Office Space use received very little support in this concept. Most comments stated there was office space already available within the City, and new space would be hard to fill. Concerns were raised over additional traffic on Chester Blvd/U.S. 27 as well.

What is missing?

- Responders requested the addition of bike infrastructure such as trails, and that residential units were needed on site. Roughly half of responses identified a lack of amenities for residents/visitors, specifically those for youth and families.



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Concept 3- Conservation Destination

Given the location and current conditions of the existing undeveloped site, there is an opportunity to embrace the natural surroundings and dynamics of this area and create a truly unique destination just outside of downtown Richmond. While steep hillsides and wooded terrain provide an obstacle to traditional development, here they can be utilized to create exciting connections and recreational uses to the Whitewater River while enhancing the use of the site. To promote activity and generate additional income, a regional sports complex or “recreation destination” may provide increased visibility to attract and sustain new businesses along Chester Boulevard. Providing amenities such as enhanced bike trails and waterfront access can create great connections for active recreation within the community.

What do you like?

- Stakeholders voiced strong support for a dedicated bike lane connecting the site to the northeast. Many also liked the idea of incorporating Freeman Park with recreational facilities on-site. Specific comments support the possibility of waterfront access, and expanding the possible zip line across the white river. The possibility of winter events using the proposed sports complex was also supported.

What do you dislike?

- Respondents did not like that roughly 13 acres to the north of the property would be undeveloped and underutilized. Specific suggestions included that the sports complex could be made larger with the additional space. It was noted that housing was not included in this concept, and the distance between the possible sports complex and existing hotels could be an issue.

What is missing?

- Multiple comments mention a lack of housing and hotels for the sports complex. Golfing, housing, amphitheater, and commercial spaces were all proposed alternatives to the proposed woodland restoration.

NEXT STEPS

The project team will revise the site concepts based on the feedback received during the steering committee meeting. Additionally, the public will have the opportunity to review the site concepts at the public event on August 31.