

"Make certain that we don't dream it forever, but do it today."

– Mayor L. Douglas Wilder,
Work-in-Progress Presentation

Downtown Master Plan

Richmond, VA

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Area: 2,176 acres
Client: City of Richmond
Venture Richmond
Year Adopted: 2008
Website: www.ci.richmond.va.us/forms/DowntownPlan.aspx

For more information, visit doverkohl.com.



Existing view of Hull Street in Manchester, one of Richmond's historic industrial districts.



Photo-realistic view of Hull Street after Plan implementation, including streetscape improvements, private investment, and public transportation.



Empty lots and parking lots are filled in with buildings making the downtown feel more complete.



The Project

Downtown Richmond is shaped by countless forces that have produced an extraordinarily historic, physically stunning city. However, much of the recent development activity has occurred in the outlying counties and suburbs, draining capital away from the heart of the city. The City of Richmond hired Dover, Kohl & Partners to create a plan to recapture development potential and channel it into the historic center, thus legitimating its title as "Virginia's Downtown." Dover-Kohl teamed with Hall Planning and Engineering, Rhodeside & Harwell, Urban Advantage, ZHA, Inc, and Zimmerman/Volk Associates to create the Plan.

The Process

Over 800 citizens and stakeholders joined Dover-Kohl and a team of experts in discussing housing, transportation planning, parks, and economic development in a seven-day charrette. The resulting Master Plan reflects the range of community brainstorming and design input, which will ultimately guide growth and ensure quality development.

Plan Principles

The Master Plan is both a physical plan to guide appropriate development and a policy document to serve as a blueprint for action. Guiding principles include preserving the traditional city; providing greater connections to the James River; encouraging appropriate urban architecture; making a 'greener' Downtown; and promoting the city's historic past. Additionally, the Plan outlines numerous incremental capital improvements such as converting one-way streets to two-way travel, planting and maintaining street trees, improving pedestrian/cyclist facilities and preparing a preliminary design for a streetcar system.

Status

The Master Plan was unanimously approved by the City Council in October 2008. In March 2009, the Plan was awarded the Outstanding Plan Award from the American Planning Association, Virginia Chapter.

The Transect



T1



T3



T4



T5



T6

These images reflect the character of various transect zones and demonstrate the best scenarios for future development.

As part of the planning process, Dover-Kohl outlined six "transect zones" for Downtown Richmond. This mapping, which identified the area's human habitats in a range from the most natural to the most urban, ultimately developed into the Future Land Use Map for Downtown. Images reflect the character of each zone and provide developers and city staff with development standards that will ensure new buildings reinforce the intended character of each place.

What is a transect?

Each Transect Zone is defined by particular characteristics that correspond with the density and intensity of land use and urbanism. These characteristics include building placement, landscaping, and curb details, all of which influence the level of walkability and vibrancy in a particular place. The Transect is an important tool because it acknowledges the diverse characteristics of villages, towns, and cities, and encourages infill and new development to respect its context.

T1: The Natural Transect Zone is characterized by a wilderness landscape that is untouched by development, and whose ecological features are preserved. The uninhabited islands in the James River are an example of a wilderness condition in Downtown Richmond. These islands remain unsettled due to periodic flooding of the river, and are preserved in their natural condition.

T2: The Rural Transect Zone is characterized by an open or agricultural landscape that is sparsely settled. The estates along the James River are an example of a rural condition in Richmond. These estates feature manor homes surrounded by expansive lawns and rolling hills.

T3: The Sub-Urban Transect Zone is characterized by low-density residential development on a connected street network. These neighborhoods usually consist of low-density, single family homes with landscaped setbacks.

T4: The General Urban Transect Zone is characterized by medium-density, mixed-use development, distributed along medium-sized blocks. Historic Jackson Ward is an example of the general urban condition in Richmond. This district is characterized by single-family homes, sideyard

houses, and rowhouses with variable setbacks and landscaping, and a limited mix of commercial and civic uses.

T5 : The Urban Center Transect Zone is characterized by higher density, mixed-use development, typically arranged on a fine-grained street network with wide sidewalks, regular tree planting, and minimal setbacks. Shockoe Slip is an example of a classic urban center condition, with a dense mix of office space, apartments, and retail located in four to six-story brick buildings that front the street. Pedestrians have an active presence in these neighborhoods.

T6: The Urban Core Transect Zone is the most urban condition in the Transect. This zone is high density, with an intense mix of uses and civic buildings of regional significance, distributed along urban blocks with wide sidewalks, regular street tree plantings, and buildings that front the street. City Center is an example of the urban core condition in Downtown Richmond, with tall buildings that contain a range of office, residential and retail space. Continued pedestrian-oriented development will support a vibrant street realm.