

Big Ideas Summary | Urban Design and Land Use

PDR staff received 539 big ideas related to Land Use and Urban Design. The ideas included both citywide and location specific recommendations

Location Specific Big Ideas

Participants provided 84 location specific big ideas which included ideas for revitalizing neighborhoods and nodes, maintaining neighborhood character, incorporating green spaces, and preserving the view shed. The neighborhoods and ideas included:

- **Areas surrounding the Diamond and the Coliseum:** Redevelop these City-owned parcels with creativity and consideration of neighborhood character.
- **Downtown:** Revitalize Downtown with density and a street level retail.
- **Design Overlays and Neighborhood Plans:** Create design overlays for Ginter Park, Stratford Hills, Shockoe Bottom, and the Riverfront. Develop neighborhood plans to the Libbie/Grove/Patterson Area, Shockoe Bottom, and the residential areas on Chamberlayne Avenue north of Brookland Park Boulevard.
- **James River Park and View Shed:** Maintain the green space surrounding the James River. Preserve the view of the river from Libby Hill. Participants also supported the BridgePark concept to create a park on a bridge across the river.
- **Oregon Hill Neighborhood:** Oregon Hill should remain a single family (medium density) residential neighborhood like the Fan with mixed use limited to Cary Street. Historic areas should not be destroyed with new development and VCU's expansion should be limited.
- **New Parks:** Develop new parks in Southside and in Scott's Addition.
- **Northside Neighborhoods:** Continue the redevelopment of the residential neighborhoods of Highland Park and Barton Heights, revitalize the commercial corridors of Brookland Park Boulevard and North Avenue, and maintain the green space at Westwood Avenue and Loxley Road.
- **Southside Commercial Corridors and Nodes:** Prioritize revitalizing the Jefferson Davis Corridor, Hull Street, Midlothian Turnpike, Southside Plaza, and Manchester to include a grocery store, a mix of uses, and the redevelopment of vacant properties.
- **Southside Neighborhoods:** Upgrade the post-war suburbs to include sidewalks, drainage improvements, and community centers. Opportunities for additional density and housing exist in the Southside.

Citywide Big Ideas

Participants provided 455 citywide policy recommendations. The largest number of recommendations involved green space with 115 big ideas addressing providing green space in parks and in site and building design. The second most prominent big idea was discussed density with 69 big ideas. Below is a summary of the citywide big ideas.

- **Green Space:** Provide accessible green spaces that are well maintained. Create new parks. Incorporate green space in new developments.
- **Density:** Encourage higher density, increased height and a mix of uses. Focus increased density near transit and the city center.
- **Right of Way Improvements:** Provide more bike lanes. Improve pedestrian safety with sidewalks and other pedestrian accommodations.
- **Walkable Neighborhoods:** Create walkable neighborhoods with a mix of uses.
- **Better Design:** Encourage better design with the emphasis on quality materials and architecture. The architecture should complement the character of the city.
- **Parking:** Remove parking minimums and encourage redevelopment of parking garages and parking lots. Require adequate parking in new developments. (Please note that the comments regarding parking varied greatly though the most prevalent comment was to remove the parking minimums and redevelop parking lots)
- **Commercial Uses:** Create pedestrian friendly commercial nodes.
- **Affordable Housing:** Lobby the General Assembly to allow for inclusionary zoning.
- **Accessory Dwelling Units:** Allow accessory dwelling units in single family areas.
- **Brownfields:** Encourage the redevelopment of brownfields.
- **Green Infrastructure and Design:** Require climate resilience in building/development design.
- **Public Process:** Provide for more community input in planning decision making process. Prioritize neighborhood interests over economic development. Increase planning staffing levels to have increased public involvement.
- **Historic Preservation:** Protect the historic fabric of the city's neighborhoods. Tell the story of the African-American history of the city. Preserve archeological resources.
- **Street Grid:** Maintain the street grid, and reopen streets to remove the superblocks.
- **Vacant Properties:** Prioritize redeveloping vacant properties. Encourage affordable housing at these sites
- **Zoning:** Update the Zoning Code. Suggestions include having flexible zoning, a form based code, or zoning that does not prioritize parking and setbacks over context.