

In fall 2018, PDR collected big ideas related to economic development to potentially include in the new city-wide Master Plan from three groups:

1. The general public via Community Consultation #1, which included 1,030 participants online and in person.
2. The Richmond 300 Advisory Council, the sub-committee of the City Planning Commission charged with overseeing the creation of the Master Plan.
3. The Richmond 300 Technical Team, which is comprised of city departments and quasi-city entities.

The big ideas from the three groups are summarized below. Please note, these summaries are what PDR heard – that does not mean that all of these ideas are appropriate for inclusion in the city-wide Master Plan because some ideas are more operational/management focused, and not land use management focused.

Community Consultation #1 - Big Ideas Summary | Economic Development

PDR staff received big ideas in three topic areas: economic development, employment & income, and arts and culture.

Economic Development

PDR staff received **459 big ideas** related to Economic Development. The ideas included both city-wide and location specific recommendations

Economic Development Location Specific Big Ideas

Participants provided **60 location specific big ideas** which primarily addressed areas that should be the focus of new economic development initiatives:

- **Historic Commercial Corridors and Commercial Nodes:** Encourage revitalization of the city's historic commercial corridors by attracting new business and retail along these corridors: Broad Street in Downtown, Grace Street in Downtown, Chamberlayne Avenue, Jefferson Davis, Hull Street, Midlothian Turnpike, Fulton Business District, South Side Plaza, and Stony Point Fashion Park.
- **City-owned Land:** Redevelop the City's property on the Boulevard, at the Coliseum, and at City Stadium. Include an arena and a ballpark in this redevelopment.
- **Destinations:** Develop and market Carytown, Jackson Ward, Shockoe Bottom, and the Riverfront as tourist, shopping, and entertainment destinations
- **Downtown:** Return downtown to being a retail center to include more shopping options and a grocery store.

Economic Development City-wide Big Ideas

Participants provided **399 city-wide policy recommendations**. The largest number of recommendations involved incentivizing small and local business and improving City schools. Below is a summary of the city-wide big ideas.

- **Encourage Small and Local Businesses:** Focus on providing incentives to small and local businesses instead of large corporations. Provide incubators and resources for start-ups. Invest in the existing small businesses in the city.
- **Improve City Schools:** Invest in Richmond Public Schools. Provide high-quality public education to create an educated workforce, retain families, and attract large corporations who are looking to attract employees that have families.
- **Affordable Housing:** The City's economic development deals should include a commitment to providing affordable housing.
- **Annex Land:** Lobby the General Assembly to allow the City to annex land.
- **Art-related Industries:** Encourage art-related industries including visual performance arts and other arts and cultural entities.
- **Attract Big Businesses:** Attract big businesses from outside of Richmond. Lure businesses from the counties. Attract businesses that provide well-paying jobs.
- **Better City Investment Choices:** Provide less public subsidies to large corporations like football teams, for-profit hospital systems, and breweries.
- **Clean and Attractive Neighborhoods:** Keep the city clean and attractive which will increase the appeal of the city to retailers and businesses. Bury power lines wherever possible.
- **Equity in Economic Development:** Economic development equity is a must. Focus investment in depressed areas and providing benefits to low-income residents.
- **Financial Incentives:**
 - **CARE Areas and Enterprise Zones:** Fund and expand CARE and Enterprise Zones. Create a CARE area in the Oakwood neighborhood.
 - **Opportunity Zones:** Develop a plan for how to best capitalize on Opportunity Zones.
 - **Façade Improvement Grants:** Expand the Façade Improvement Grant Program to other neighborhoods in the city including Hull Street.
 - **Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and Tax Abatements:** Maximize the use of Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and the City's Tax Abatement Program. Reduce or eliminate the Tax Abatement Program. (Please note that opinions varied on this topic.)
- **Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT):** Require VCU and the state government buildings to pay their full share of PILOT.
- **Retail, Grocery Stores, and Restaurants:** Bring more retail to the city. Encourage the development of grocery stores in the city's food deserts. Modify laws to not require bars to sell a certain percentage of food.
- **Housing:** Creating housing should be a part of economic development.
- **Industrial Base:** Maintain and expand the industrial base. Focus industrial development along the Commerce Road and Deepwater Terminal Road corridors with infrastructure improvements along with Port improvements.
- **Minority Businesses:** Encourage and incentivize minority businesses.
- **City Hall Processes and Permitting:** Limit barriers to small business development. Improve the permitting processes. Create a one stop shop to allow new small businesses to navigate all City processes in one place (taxes, licenses, permitting).
- **Regional Efforts:** Coordinate regionally on economic development and attracting big businesses to the area.
- **Sustainability in Economic Development:** Incentivize businesses that promote sustainability and renewable energy. Utilize green construction methods.

- **Taxes:**
 - **Enforcement:** Collect delinquent taxes.
 - **Business, Professional and Occupational License (BPOL) Tax:** Reduce the BPOL to prevent businesses from leaving the city to go to the counties.
 - **Tax Rate:** Comments were received that both encouraged lowering and increasing the current tax rate.
- **Technology Industry:** Bring technology companies to town.
- **Tourism:** Continue to focus on attracting visitors with tourism and events.
- **Transit:** Connect jobs to transit.
- **Vacant Buildings:** Encourage the redevelopment of vacant buildings.

Employment & Income

PDR staff received **331 big ideas related** to Employment & Income.

- **Job Creation & Attraction: 94 big ideas** are related to this topic:
 - **Attract more companies:** Continue to make the city a desirable destination for companies to locate to bring more jobs.
 - **Create more jobs and businesses:** Create more employment opportunities through strategies such as job incubators, small business incentives, and co-working spaces.
 - **Create green energy jobs:** Incentivize and promote the growing green energy sector to create more jobs in this industry.
 - **Support services:** Provide child care and other support services so single-parents can participate more fully in the workforce.
 - **Regulation and tax reform:** Reduce taxes and relax regulation of businesses to spur more business and job creation.
 - **Mixed-use zoning:** Promote more mixed-use development so that residents can support businesses while also providing commercial and office space in mostly-residential buildings.
 - **Retain commercial and industrial land:** Preserve land for commercial and industrial uses.
 - **Improve Richmond Public Schools:** Improve the condition of Richmond Public Schools so that businesses, employers, and employees continue to locate to Richmond.
- **Living Wage & Wealth Creation: 116 big ideas** are related to this topic area:
 - **Raise the minimum wage:** Raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour to provide living wages to all employees in the public and private sectors.
 - **Cost of living increases:** Encourage all employers to provide cost of living salary increases so that employees can continue to be able to afford to live in the city.
 - **Increase pay for public sector employees:** Increase the pay of City workers, teachers, police officers, and fire fighters.
 - **Equity:** Focus on equity issues, especially regarding the discrepancy of pay for women and minorities.
 - **Access to jobs:** Improve the transit system to provide access to jobs, especially from neighborhoods with low automobile ownership.
 - **Inclusionary zoning:** Promote policies that create affordable housing options and mixed-income projects and neighborhoods.
 - **Improve Richmond Public Schools:** Improve Richmond Public Schools to increase education outcomes and potential future earnings.

- **Workforce Development: 60 big ideas** are related to this topic area:
 - **Apprenticeships and mentorships:** Expand or create new apprenticeship and mentorship programs specifically targeted for those with lower-incomes or lower-levels of education.
 - **Job preparation:** Focus on training programs to prepare low-income and under/unemployed individuals for employment.
 - **Vocational training:** Create more vocational training programs, starting in high school, that focus on job skills that do not require a college or advanced degree.
 - **STEM and technology jobs:** Focus on training programs to prepare individuals for potential future STEM and technology jobs.
 - **More job training:** Provide a variety of new and creative job training programs, such as partnerships with small businesses and direct training to jobs pathways, while utilizing public facilities such as schools, libraries, and community centers.

Culture and Tourism

PDR staff received **451 big ideas** related to Culture and Tourism.

- **Focus on Richmond's History: 94 big ideas** are related to this topic:
 - **African American Story:** Highlight black history and culture in the city to include developing a plan for Shockoe Bottom, expanding the slave trail, and honoring the contributions of African Americans in the city.
 - **Promote All History:** Present a balanced view of city's history including the city's dark periods. Ensure all stories are told by historic tourism including the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the African American story, and Native American history and culture.
 - **Highlight Historic Sites:** Promote, maintain, and connect the city's historic sites and neighborhoods as they attract tourists.
 - **Monuments:** Address the Confederate monuments in the Master Plan. (Please note that opinions on what should be done with the monuments varied greatly and included removing all monuments, keeping all monuments, relocating monuments to museums, and providing interpretive signage.)
 - **Change the Narrative: Emphasize and promote the city as more than the Capital of the Confederacy.**
- **Focus on the Arts: 43 big ideas** are related to this topic:
 - **Encourage and Fund Public Art:** Fund public art and encourage more murals and public art in the city.
 - **Art Programs for Youth and Underserved Communities:** Fund non-profits that bring art and art spaces to youth and underserved communities.
 - **Film Industry:** Encourage more television and movie filming in the city.
- **Focus on Hosting Events: 41 big ideas** are related to this topic area:
 - **Encourage More Festivals: Host more festivals including cultural festivals, music festivals, and family-oriented festivals.**
 - **International Events:** Host more international events like the UCI 2015 Bike Race.
 - **Conventions: Increase the number of conventions coming to the Convention Center.**
 - **Sustainable Event Policy:** Require events which use public space to follow a sustainable event policy which includes recycling, composting, water refill stations, etc.

- **Advertising and Promotion of the City:** Invest in advertising and tourism promotion. Effectively communication to tourist and residents about events and the history of Richmond.
- **Clean Up the City:** Maintain and clean up the city with special attention to the city's gateways, the Convention Center, and along the River and the Canals.
- **Increase the Commercial Opportunities:** Create commercial corridors like Carytown on Forest Hill Avenue in Westover Hills, Hull Street in Manchester, and 2nd Street in Jackson Ward. Encourage restaurants, breweries, farmers markets, and grocery stores. Encourage retail in downtown.
- **Promote the Diversity of the City:** Grow the city's cultural presence to include stories from all cultures. Continue to celebrate and foster diversity and inclusion.
- **Improve the City for the Existing Residents:** Improve the city for the existing residents, and tourism will grow too. Focus on making Richmond a great place for all to live.
- **Provide Lodging Options:** Increase the number of hotel rooms within the city. Encourage the development of hostels. Develop legislation to regulate short-term rentals (Airbnb, etc.) that allows for the use while preserving neighborhoods.
- **Promote the City's Museums:** Promote, expand, and invest in the city's museums.
- **Parks and Natural Resources: Promote the City's park system especially the James River Park System (JRPS).** Highlight the city's natural and recreational resources including recreation on the water. Improve access to the waterfront and implement the Riverfront Plan. Create more green and public spaces throughout the city. Connect the city throughout networks of trails like the Virginia Capital Trail.
- **Regional Cooperation:** Pursue regional cooperation to promote tourism for the region.
- **Signage:** Improve signage including informative, interpretive, and directional signage.
- **Sports Teams and Venues:** Accommodate sports teams including baseball, hockey, and basketball by renovating or rebuilding the Coliseum and the baseball diamond.
- **Sports Tourism:** Encourage sports tourism to compete with the counties.
- **City Tourism Office:** Adequately fund the City's Tourism Office.
- **Encourage Multi-modal Transportation:** Increase access to Amtrak by providing more service to Main Street Station. Improve public transit throughout the city including connections to the airport. Reintroduce trolleys and provide a tram for tourists to move around the city.
- **Performance Venues:** Provide performance venues of all sizes including the development of a new arena to attract a range of performers.
- **View from Libby Hill Park:** Do not block the view from Libby Hill Park as this view is a part of historic tours of the city because it is a unique and important view of the River.
- **Visitor's Center:** Develop a visitor's center to be located at a gateway like Leigh and Belvidere.

Advisory Council - Big Ideas Summary | Economic Development

- Vocational/job training focused on young people and in each high school.
- Redefine what a "job" is.
 - Quality jobs that benefit people with adequate wages and benefits.
- Livable wage and/or support programs.
- Schools to teach job skills and provide help in getting a job.
- Targeted areas for job and business creation
 - A comprehensive approach

- Different for different areas
- Incentives based on business size
 - Small business help/assistance/liaison
 - Fee abatement
- More incentives for projects that increase access and equity
 - Economic justice
- More retail
- More entertainment uses in other areas, not just downtown.
- Green incentives and green industry
- Vacant building redevelopment – incentives or force
- Temporary programming of vacant buildings
- Additional tax for vacant buildings
- Increase the PILOT
- Locate industry along I-95 further south
- Strategies for redeveloping defunct, large commercial parcels.
 - Create smaller blocks
- Create a small business strategy to encourage small and local businesses
- Develop programs to create an educated work force
 - Develop technology skill in students from a young age
- More resources for tech development in the city
- Menu of incentives to redeploy city assets
- Encourage reinvestment in designated corridors
- Link Council process of identifying surplus property to incentives (define what is meant by incentives)
- Determine what goals we have for City properties – may not all be surplus as we may have future needs (may need schools in the future, etc.)
- Identify industrial nodes that should be protected
- Support the Port!
- Equity in economic development
- Revitalization Overlay/Nodes
- Develop priority list of where investment needs to occur and provide incentives
- Revisit Conservation District boundaries
- Continue tax abatement programs – incentive to help property owners
- Different incentives for different types of corridors
- Incentives like tax abatement for uses we want to see
- Look to Buffalo for incentives for tech startups – companies leave when they scale up
- Incentives biotech industries.

Technical Team - Big Ideas Summary | Economic Development

- Identify economic growth areas in the master plan
- Develop small area plans for key commercial and industrial corridors – South Side Plaza, Richmond Marine Terminal, Jeff Davis Corridor, Boulevard (eco-district), Brookland Park, Midlothian, Hull, Manchester
- Identify, protect, and promote industrial areas for large and small scale manufacturing – (identify the properties adjacent to rail and utilities) – this can include making sure that industrial land is not rezoned to other uses and changing land to industrial zoning
- Connect transit to jobs

- Work with VCU to increase the PILOT
- Explore new taxation tools
- Identify areas that are green development zones
- Create an industrial/economic development plan – can we identify a targeted industry and develop a cluster strategy– specifically around the port (an asset no one else has in the region), biotech park expansion (into a redeveloped Gilpin?),
- Identify and promote targeted industries: tourism, life sciences, corporate services (FIRE), supply chain, advanced manufacturing
- Create a small business strategy (start-up tech)
- City to acquire and control land
- Create a program for assembling land that allows folks to change the zoning as they prep for sale but not pay the increase in taxes until the property sells (ex. Hanover program)
- Create a strategy for redeveloping and promoting large size parcels (5+ acres, or 2-3 acres that are adjacent and can be assembled)
- Commit to an equitable economic development strategy
- Commit to develop a program with RPS, higher education, and companies
- Utilize city-owned property (and acquire strategically) to support education/training hubs – to serve as anchor institutions
- Develop a strategy for redeveloping shuttered schools – in disposition of property, include requirements for the uses