



II. COMMUNITY INPUT

“Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, American Cultural Anthropologist [1901-1978]
Author: Coming of Age in Samoa 1928

II. COMMUNITY INPUT

A. Introduction

The astute leadership of the Mayor and the steadfast efforts of the Steering Committee have been essential in the preparation of this comprehensive plan. The purpose of this document is to guide city officials in their choices about the future uses of community lands, while planning for the growth and development of the city. Over the past several decades, the City of Richmond has experienced economic highs and lows in its downtown area known as Uptown, while experiencing growth in industrial parks along Interstate-70 and an influx of medical/office complexes.



Source: KKG

The City of Richmond embarked on this comprehensive planning process in an effort to develop a long-term vision for the city that will help guide city officials in making decisions for the betterment of the community. Beginning in January 2005 and continuing through January 2006, Kinzelman Kline Gossman with a team of sub consultants, assisted city officials and staff, the appointed Steering Committee and the Advisory Plan Commission in creating a comprehensive plan for the City of Richmond.

The City of Richmond's residents were actively involved in the preparation of this plan by participating in a series of U-Plan Community Meetings held in the months of April and May 2005. These public meetings were held at a central location in each quadrant of the city. A Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) exercise gathered public opinion at these meetings. In addition, a community survey was developed and distributed to the public via local schools, newspapers, businesses, and other public locations. The survey requested input from residents about pertinent community issues. These participants provided valuable information and insight for the planning team to consider. The consulting team helped to facilitate this phase of the planning process by assessing the data, providing insight and guidance on the local conditions, plus by definitively establishing a list of prioritized goals and objectives for the community to pursue.

The City of Richmond occupies 25.49 square miles of land with approximately 40,000 residents. The two-mile fringe area, which is unincorporated land contiguous to the City of Richmond, occupies 32.09 square miles.

B. Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was formed to govern and guide the development of the comprehensive plan. The Mayor of Richmond selected a diverse representation of community residents for the Steering Committee. These included residents and business owners, plus members of government, civic, faith and educational institutions of the city. The role of the Steering Committee is to contribute a broad and diverse perspective of the city's many neighborhood and business needs, while assisting in the preparation of a balanced vision for Richmond's future. The Steering Committee provided their "big picture" input into the comprehensive plan development.



Steering Committee Meeting July 19, 2005

Source: KKG

Steering Committee members participated in and helped to guide the U-Plan meetings, plus coordinated the public outreach efforts conducted during the comprehensive planning process.

The Steering Committee was charged with:

- Creating a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement.
- Defining preliminary Goals and Objectives.
- Creating strategies to achieve a community sense of place and identity.
- Formulating ideas for future land use change.
- Identifying the key issues and needs of the community.
- Working with the participating stakeholders on identifying community issues.
- Refining a framework for improving community character and quality of life.

The committee planning work involved participation in group meetings, with analysis and discussion of land use issues, future growth/changes, development controls, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, park and open space, community facilities, housing and other community needs. The committee planning work served to develop a framework for the Comprehensive Plan and accompanying implementation strategies.

C. Community Participation

The comprehensive planning process spanned a twelve-month period. It included the input of community-based citizens and a wide variety of community leaders. A community input program was structured and conducted through a formal process. Citizens and businesses were encouraged to participate in the visioning and planning process. The Steering Committee worked with the City of Richmond's consultant team to develop a plan to include land use, to identify important issues in the neighborhoods and community, plus to establish goals and objectives for the City of Richmond's Comprehensive Plan.

The "existing conditions" information, along with educational materials about basic planning principles was given to the Steering Committee. As a means of acquiring public opinion, participants were to comment on Richmond's issues, strengths, and weaknesses, plus the goals and objectives for a comprehensive plan. With the leadership of the "citizen planners" and Steering Committee, consensus-building exercises included the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), surveys, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and in-depth group discussions. The community input activities led to the development of draft mission and vision statements, draft goals, objectives and recommendations, the development of preliminary implementation strategies, and recommendations to bring about positive change in the city, while preserving existing assets. The meeting comments were summarized and distributed to the Steering Committee and consulting team. Many of these comments are reflected in the goals and objectives contained within the various elements of this plan.

The Community Input Process: Community members working together

As a community-based planning process, "visioning" typically follows a series of distinct steps. These often include:

- Profiling the existing community.
- Exploring the impact of emerging trends and issues.
- Creating a vision for the future.
- Developing a strategic action plan to achieve that vision.

Each step in the visioning process involves distinct activities and results. The entire process may be scaled up or down, depending on a community's overall goals, needs, and resources. Typically, local governments, civic organizations, community groups, public/private partnerships, or a combination of these groups sponsor this process. The process of visioning is often as important as its products. The best visioning efforts will engage entire communities in working together to create a positive vision for their future.

Community input and strategizing offers many potential benefits for a community, such as:

- Bringing community members together in a proactive way.
- Envisioning new opportunities and possibilities for the future.
- Developing goals, strategies and benchmarks for change.
- Enriching citizen involvement in local government.
- Promoting visionary community leadership.
- Providing a broader foundation for planning and decision-making.
- Fostering new public/private partnerships for action.

D. Educating Citizen Planners

The Steering Committee received educational materials in order to educate them about basic planning principles and consensus building, while preparing them for what to expect when participating on a committee. The consulting team advised to the Steering Committee members and group participants about effective methods of participation as citizen planners. At the beginning of several initial meetings, the Steering Committee received an overview of general planning objectives, planning principles, land use, zoning, and the comprehensive planning process. General land use planning principles were developed and used for the project. These principles and other educational materials were presented to the committee members and distributed to members before meetings.

E. Citizen Survey

Richmond citizens were invited to participate in a series of workshops during the months of April and May 2005. The objective of these workshops was to understand the public's point of view about the city and its future. In addition to the workshops, a survey was developed and made available to the community through the Palladium newspaper, the city's web site, the U-Plan meetings, and other government agencies. The survey solicited input on the important issues and visions for Richmond. Two hundred and twenty-four surveys were returned and tabulated. The survey asked participants to answer three questions, and to list what they felt the community should consider the most important goals. The results of this survey are listed below.

The priorities that ranked most important were:

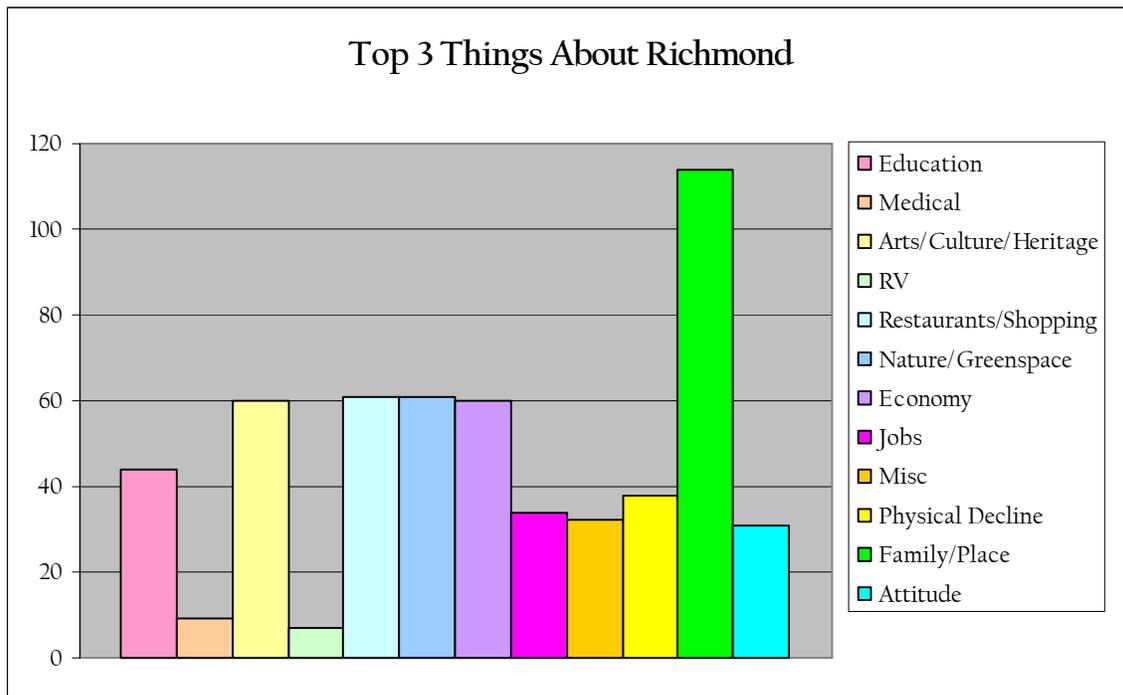
- Thriving Economy
- Vibrant Community
- Natural Resources
- Transportation/Infrastructure
- Entertainment/Recreation
- Other

The participants selected a thriving economy as the highest priority goal for the City of Richmond. It is important for residents to have personal success, employment opportunities, and ability to retain and expand their businesses, and opportunities for entertainment. Having a vibrant community ranked second. Having clean, safe, healthy neighborhoods with a rich sense of community was selected as very important to the overall aesthetic and social healthiness of Richmond.

The responses to the questions to the survey are summarized below:

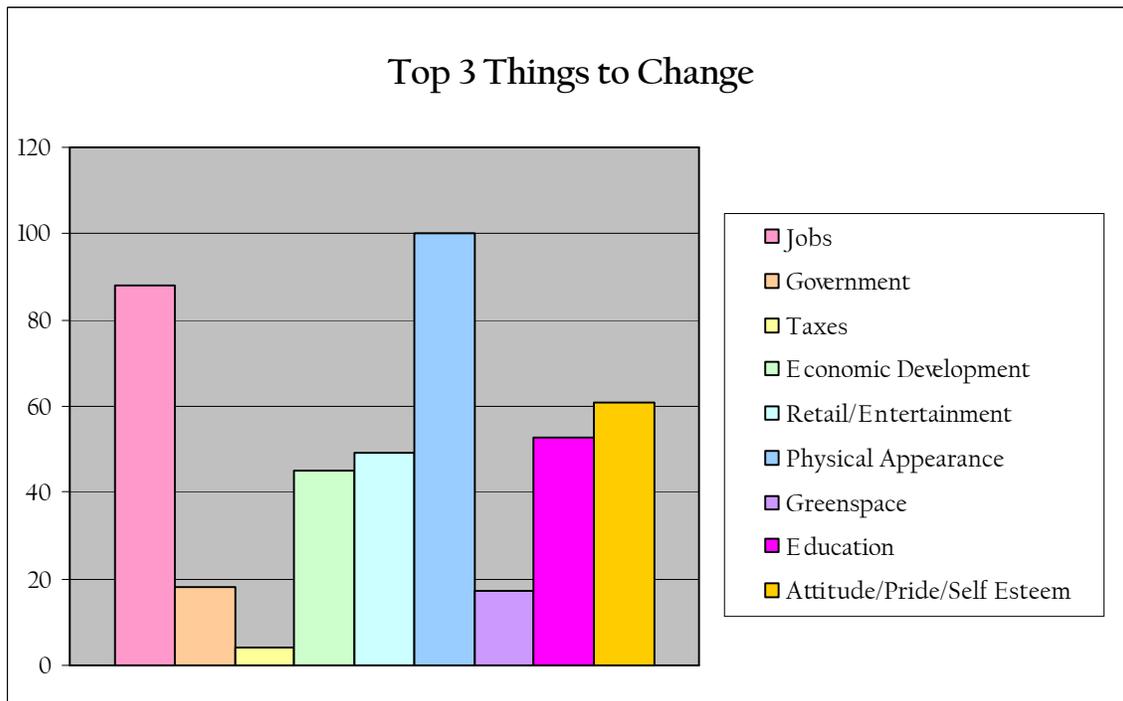
1. When you think of Richmond, what are the top three things that come to mind?

Respondents stated that the aspects of the City of Richmond that most often come to mind are its sense of family and community, “a good place to raise a family”, and its sense of community spirit. Respondents felt restaurants, shopping, the arts, cultural heritage, and green spaces to be equally important. Respondents felt that green spaces and natural resources within the community were very desirable. Participants stated that they felt “proud” and “valued” these community resources, including the Gorge, the Hayes Arboretum, and the local parks. Respondents indicated that these areas must be preserved. Their references about local shopping and retail included dissatisfaction with the many “big box” shopping centers in the area and that Richmond’s west side has insufficient opportunities to shop. Respondents enjoy the arts and cultural heritage of the city. Noted were the museums, the cultural heritage, the rich architecture, the jazz heritage, and the symphony.



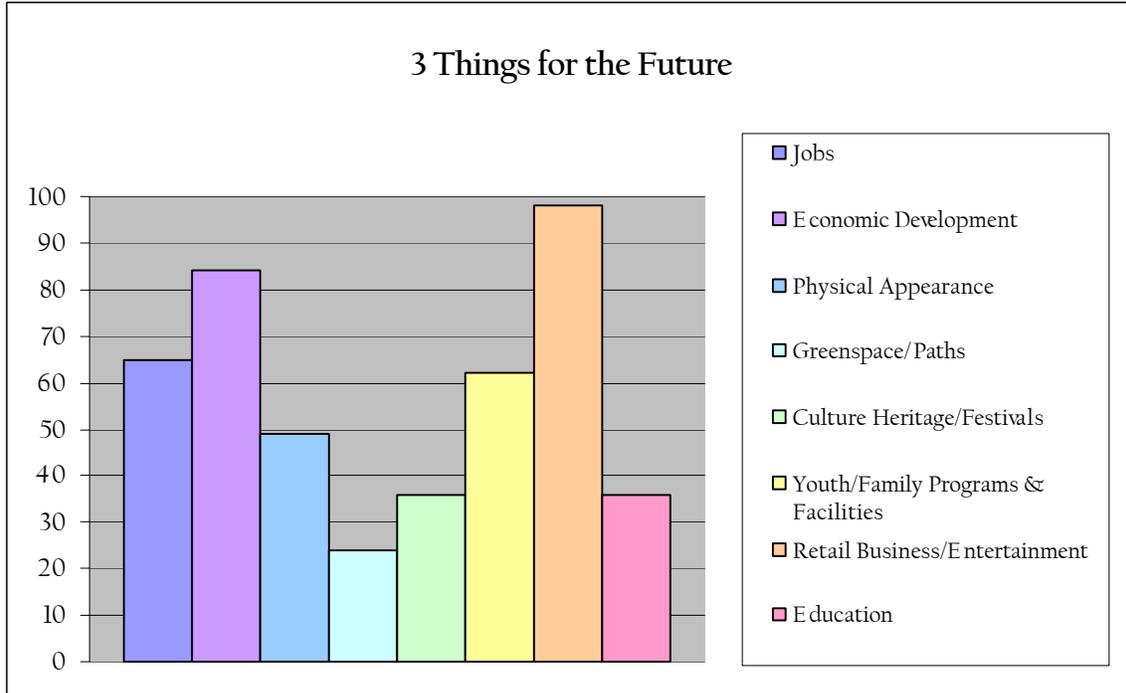
2. What are the top three items that you would like to change about the community?

Respondents have many ideas about what needs to change in Richmond. In summary, they desire a physically attractive city with a strong sense of identity and community events celebrating the city’s cultural heritage. Participants indicate that they desire quality residential and commercial areas with unified streetscape elements, sidewalks, and gateways. Preference was also given to better regulatory controls such as design guidelines and zoning laws, and an interest in thriving commercial areas on the east and west sides. Opportunities for employment ranked very high. Respondents want jobs with opportunities for advancements. Respondents want Richmond residents to have reasons to feel better about their community. This will help to improve the residents’ attitudes by inspiring a sense of community-esteem.



3. What are three things you would like Richmond to have in the future?

Respondents want more choices in retail and entertainment opportunities including restaurants, shops, and entertainment destinations. Participants wish for more and better jobs, plus a stronger economy. Respondents want more industry, growth, businesses, better jobs, and middle management positions.



F. U-Plan Meetings

U-Plan 2005

forward Richmond!
Building our future together

The City of Richmond encourages citizens from all over the city to attend one of these important U-Plan sessions!

Forward Richmond is a city-wide comprehensive plan that asks you to decide the kind of city in which you want to live, work and play. Together we will protect our neighborhoods, encourage business growth, revitalize distressed areas, and make our community more vibrant and successful. For more information, contact Scott Zimmerman, City Planning Director at 765.983.7343 or visit www.ci.richmond.in.us

U-Plan Northeast
April 26
Place: Indiana University East
Symposium Hall
1175 Creamer Blvd.
Time: 7 - 9 p.m.

U-Plan Northwest
April 27
Place: Holy Family Catholic Church
Symposium
815 West Main Street
Time: 7 - 9 p.m.

U-Plan Richmond
April 30
Place: Uptown Innovation Center
814 East Main Street
Time: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

U-Plan Southeast
May 3
Place: Earlham College
Barton Center
Construction Room
851 National Road West
Time: 7 - 9 p.m.

U-Plan Southeast
May 4
Place: Boys and Girls Clubs of Wayne County
1717 South "U" Street
Time: 7 - 9 p.m.

It's your turn! Be a player in the city's Comprehensive Plan!

Sessions conducted by

A map shows the locations of the U-Plan sessions relative to US 40 and US 52. Sessions are held in the four quadrants: Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast.

Source: KKG

A major effort in the comprehensive planning process was identifying the relevant issues for each neighborhood. The City of Richmond held a series of public meetings called U-Plan sessions in April and May 2005. The meetings took place throughout the city, so that everyone could attend and share their ideas about how Richmond should grow during the next several years.

The locations for the U-Plan sessions include:

- U-Plan Northeast - April 26, 7-9 p. m. - Indiana University East
- U-Plan Northwest - April 27, 7-9 p. m. - Holy Family Catholic Church
- U-Plan Richmond - April 30, 10 a. m. - Noon - Uptown Innovation Center
- U-Plan Southwest - May 3, 7-9 p. m. - Earlham College
- U-Plan Southeast - May 4, 7-9 p. m. - Boys and Girls Clubs of Wayne County

The public participated in a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is an information gathering exercise that planners and other organizations use to solicit public opinion on various issues of community growth and quality of life. Although not a scientific analysis, a SWOT exercise provides planners with insight into the community through residents' responses. Individuals are asked to identify what they feel to be strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for their neighborhoods. Subsequently, they explain what they feel is a current threat to their neighborhood, or that is a potential threat if certain changes happen. Collectively, these neighborhood responses help to identify some common concerns in the community. Their opinions are felt to reflect those of the general community. The planning team developed themes based on the reoccurring comments from these participants. These themes are important for the development of focus areas in the comprehensive plan. The workshops produce information, which is tabulated and the results summarized. [See below] These comments, along with survey results, stakeholder interviews, and focus group meetings become the foundation for the comprehensive plan.



Source: KKG

Below is a summary of common themes from the five U-Plan input sessions:

- Economic Development.
- Continued preservation and betterment of Richmond's green spaces and natural resources.
- Developing more programs and promoting neighborhood and community programs for youths and adults.
- Establishing higher aesthetic standards for the community as a whole.
- Linking the established higher education institutions into the community.
- Arts and culture.
- Developing a more stable economic climate, which will attract more middle management jobs.
- More stores, restaurants, and tourism.
- Preserving the rich architectural buildings, rich culture of the area.



Source: KKG

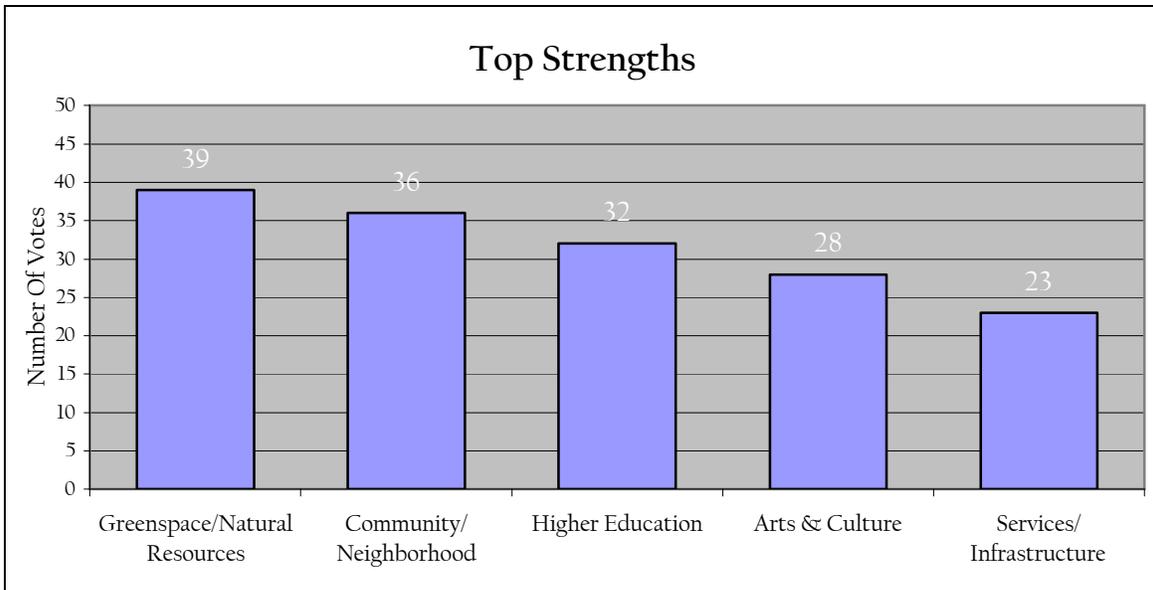
SWOT

Each neighborhood began to examine the community and neighborhood issues that were relevant to them because of the SWOT exercises. The participants' concerns are considered representative of opinions held by Richmond's general population. These concerns are important contributions that need to be addressed by either the comprehensive plan or a neighborhood plan. The items listed from the SWOT analysis are not necessarily the same issues discussed in later Steering Committee meetings. Below is a summary of the SWOT analysis:

Top Strengths

Community's most significant strengths:

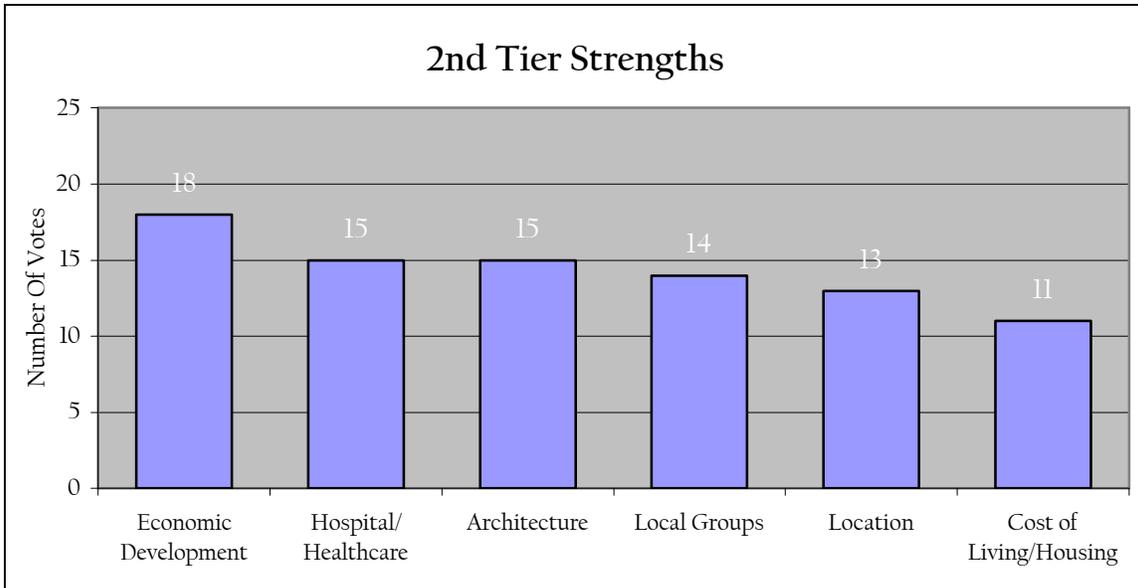
- Green Space and Park system including the Cardinal Greenway, the Gorge, the Middlefork Reservoir
- Tree lined streets
- A Strong Sense of Community
- Neighborhoods
- The Family Friendly Atmosphere
- Diversity of the Neighborhoods
- Institutions of Higher Education and Learning
- Arts and Culture
- Good Community Services
- Infrastructure



Second Tier Strengths

The second tier strengths indicate the other issues that were listed by the participants:

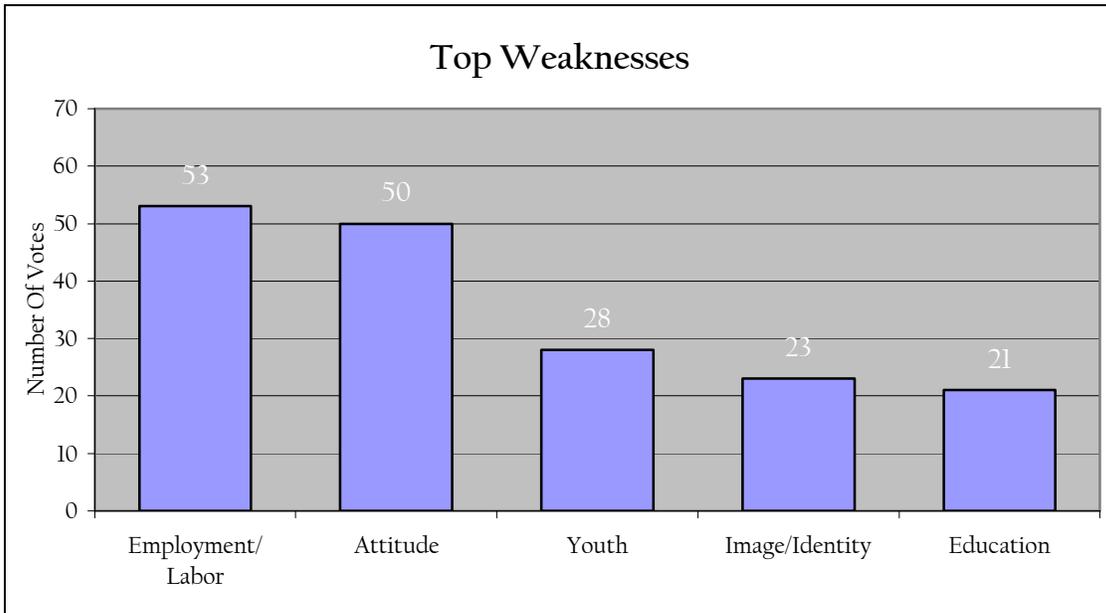
- Economic Development
- Healthcare and Hospitals in Richmond
- The unique architecture
- The local community groups
- Richmond’s central location
- The low cost of living and housing
- Public services and infrastructure are beautiful and in excellent repair
- Green space is abundant and visible
- Commercial Areas and Districts are established.
- Central location and access off I-70
- Uniqueness of Business Districts and Residential Neighborhoods



Top Weaknesses

The most commonly listed weaknesses were identified as:

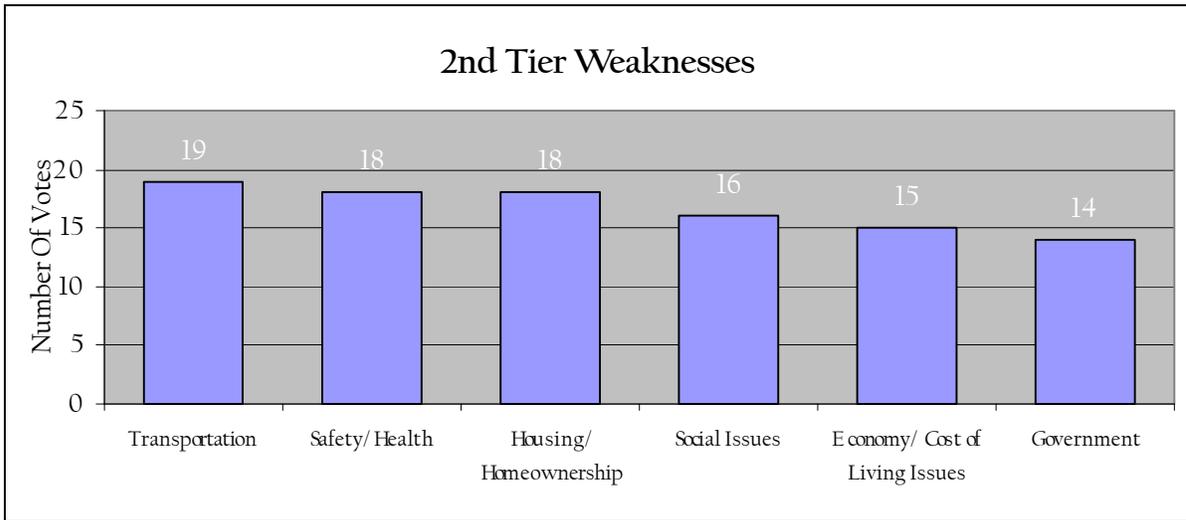
- Richmond’s lack of employment and strong labor force
- A poor attitude among residents regarding pride about the City and reluctance to change
- Richmond’s Youth:
 - Teen Pregnancy Rate
 - Need more programs for teens/kids
 - Young people are leaving
 - Lack of Parenting and Parenting skills
 - Parenting Issues
 - Lack of Youth Activities
 - Disrespect by Youth
 - Lack of communication between different ages/groups
 - Juvenile Crime
 - Lack of Juvenile Justice/Probation/ Punishments
 - Young people do not stay or return
- Richmond’s poor image and identity
- The lack of higher education opportunities for local residents



Second Tier Weaknesses

The second tier weaknesses indicate the other issues that were listed by the participants:

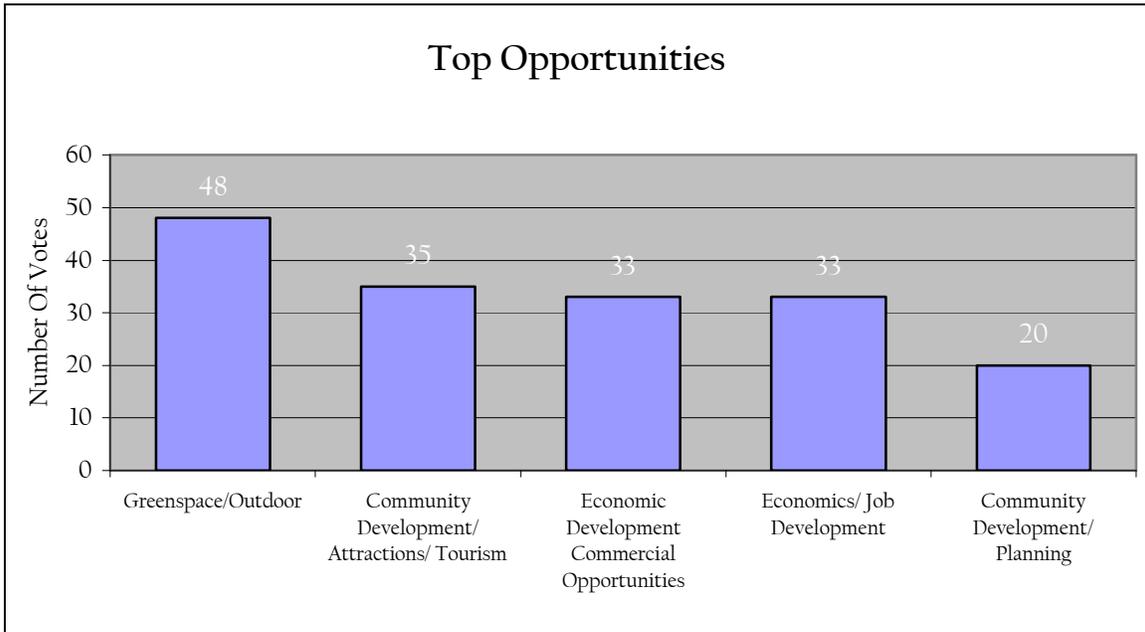
- Richmond’s transportation system
- Poor roadways
- The safety and health issues of the community
- Housing Variety and a high percentage of rental housing
- Social issues
- The economy
- Lack of Government leadership



Top Opportunities

Richmond has much community enrichment to consider for the future. The participants expressed these as the most desirable opportunities for the community to pursue:

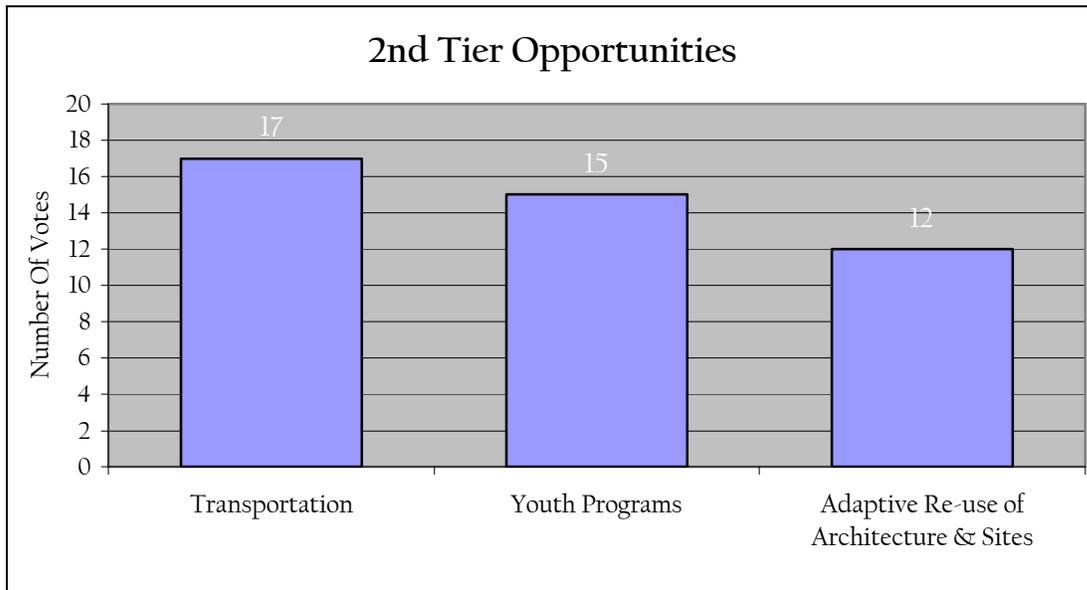
- Green Spaces and Natural Resources
- Economic Development
- Commercial Development
- Job Development
- Tourism Opportunities
 - Bed and breakfast development
 - Heritage Tourism
 - Shopping districts in downtown and neighborhood business districts
 - Restaurants and other business that can benefit from a river location
- Trail services including equipment sales, rentals, and concessions
- Expand Business Districts
- Recruit specific mix of businesses for neighborhood business districts
- Commercial area boundaries could be redefined
- Housing to attract first-time homebuyers
- Develop a balanced blend of residential and commercial uses
- Zoning regulations need to support the plan, vision and proposed development



Second Tier Opportunities

The second tier opportunities indicate the other issues that were listed by the participants.

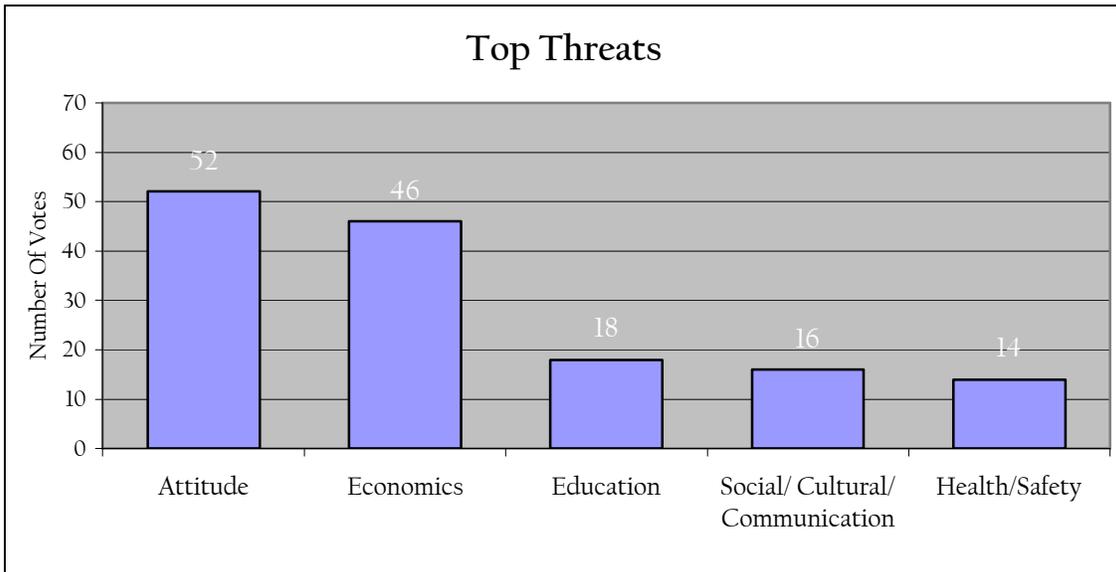
- Transportation
 - Airport
 - Multi modal
 - Alternative Methods
 - Access to Transportation
- Youth Programs
- Adaptive re-use of Architecture
 - Historic Preservation
 - Fix-up Uptown Houses



Top Threats

Richmond faces several critical threats or issues that must be overcome to allow the strengths and opportunities to develop. The most commonly listed threats were identified as:

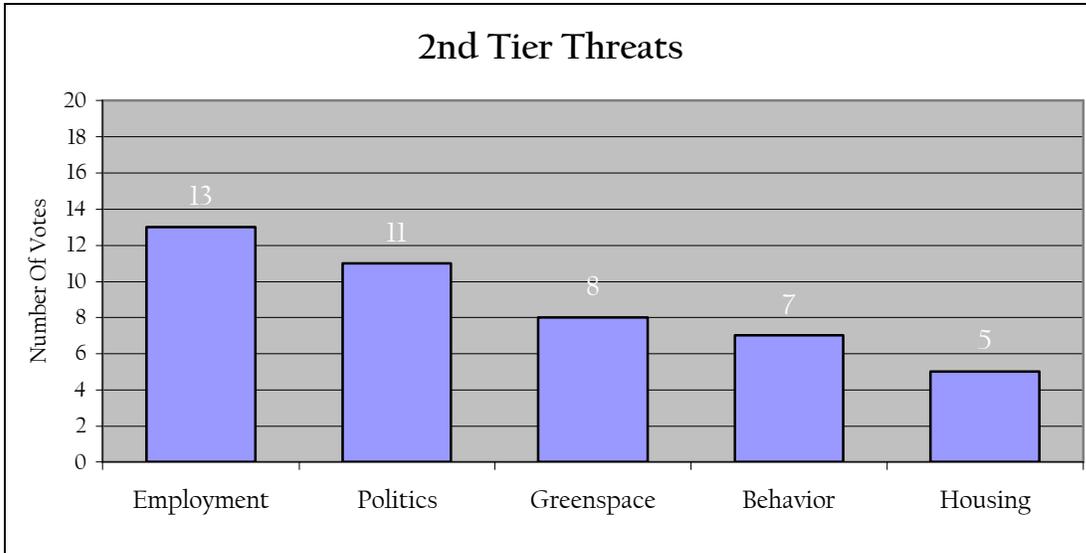
- Poor attitude of residents
- Sense of apathy among the community as a whole
- The economic decline of the city
- Community youth not tracking to higher education opportunities
- Poor social and cultural communication between the classes
- Overall health of the community in terms of physical appearance and safety



Second Tier Threats

The second tier threats indicate the other issues that were listed by the participants although less frequently:

- Employment
- Politics
- Greenspace
- Behavior
- Housing



G. SWOT Conclusions

Richmond's strengths include its tree-lined streets, green spaces, and natural resources, including the Cardinal Greenway, the Gorge, and Middlefork Reservoir. Richmond has a strong sense of community, it reflects family values, and it has a family friendly environment. Richmond's unique and rich heritage, arts and cultural facilities, educational institutions, and sterling community services are Richmond's strengths to build upon. These strengths are valuable resources that can offer Richmond residents many opportunities for improving the quality of their lives.



Source: KKG

Opportunities are elements in a community that have valuable potential for contributing to the welfare of the community. Richmond's opportunities include investment opportunities, economic partnering, tourism, and the development of retail and entertainment destinations. Richmond must preserve and build upon the green spaces and park systems. The city is in a position to redesign its community planning and development processes, with guidelines for creating a sustainable economic system that has a skilled labor force and employment opportunities.

Weaknesses are elements of a community that either currently detract or have the potential for detracting from the welfare of the community. Richmond's weaknesses of greatest concern include insufficient upper level employment, poor community attitude of its residents, poor city image and identity, plus its lack of educational opportunities for its citizens.

Threats or barriers to success facing Richmond in the future are not difficult to overcome. The list assembled from the U-Plan sessions includes several key concerns; a more positive and open attitude of the citizens regarding their city, creatively addressing the declining economy, improving the level of education among the residents, and addressing the perception of safety in Richmond.

H. Stakeholder Interviews

The city invited stakeholders to provide the planning team with information and insight about the issues facing Richmond in the future. The Richmond Innovation Center was the site of several sessions. With Craig Gossman, as the mediator, the stakeholders met at different times on March 14, 15, and on April 27, 2005. Each focus group varied in number. The discussion was based on eight questions about downtown Richmond, and six questions about the city itself. Stakeholders were business and community leaders of profit and non-profit organizations in the City of Richmond. The questions included:

Center City/Downtown

1. What are positive attributes of Downtown Richmond?
2. What are negative attributes of Downtown Richmond?
3. What businesses/shops/etc. do you think should be located in Downtown Richmond? Why?
4. What projects are you working on in your area of expertise that could influence or impact the future of Richmond?
5. What would you like to see in Downtown Richmond in terms of redevelopment?
6. What are the qualities of Richmond that should be kept?
7. What quality of life attributes would attract people and families to live in Richmond?
8. Were you a resident/business during the last revitalization of Downtown Richmond in 1998/1999? If so, has the downtown quality of life been enhanced?

City of Richmond – Overall

1. What are positive attributes of Richmond?
2. What are negative attributes of Richmond?
3. How do you see Richmond in ten years?
4. What are the qualities of Richmond that should be kept? Not kept?
5. What quality of life attributes would attract people and families to live in Richmond?
6. Comparing Richmond to other places you have been that you liked, what things about the places you liked could be applied to Richmond?

Responses received from each meeting are:

March 14 and 15, 2005

- Capitalize on Bicentennial Events
- Housing Program Issues – Increase 1st time home owners
- Promote Tourism and recreation
- Promote skilled trades with Richmond High School
- Welcome new businesses
 - Tax abatements
 - Parking and load permits
- Focus on eye sores: old or empty store fronts and businesses
- Location of jail creates challenge
- Support from educational systems to improve workforce

- Living Units above storefronts
- Promote and develop Gorge and greenways
- Promote economic stability and sustainability of downtown and adjacent areas
- Reduce restaurant turnover downtown
- The need for additional meeting/conference space downtown

April 27, 2005

- In need of more Youth focused activities
- Opportunity for 2nd floor upper story development
- Lack of services to meet downtown housing needs
- Introduction of wireless to downtown/Wayne County
- Ease parking issue downtown
- Create more diverse housing market
- Creation of higher paying jobs – technology based jobs
- Better job at marketing Richmond and Downtown
- Capitalize on Industry and Technology park

I. Community Input Summary

The community input process identified the most pressing and important city issues. The U-Plan community meetings, survey responses, and stakeholder interviews provided the Steering Committee with information about the key issues and themes of the community. Subsequently, the planning team was able to develop a list of issues and themes that are important to the community. The planning team frequently referred to this information during the development of the comprehensive plan.

Issues

The key issues as identified by the community input are listed in order of importance:

- Economic Development
- Job Creation
- Physical Appearance of the Community
- Community Services
- Community Resources
- Sense of City Identity and Pride

Themes

The key issues were translated into themes that convey aspirations for Richmond.

The themes identified for the community are:

- Thriving Economy
- Successful Jobs
- Quality of Life
- Vibrant City Identity and Theme
- Sustainable Neighborhoods and Community Services
- Development Controls and Protection
- Education

Draft Goals

In response to the identified themes, draft goals were developed. The draft goals are broad-based statements that represent the purpose or end of the comprehensive planning process and thus provide direction for the development of Richmond's Comprehensive Plan. The draft goals identified for the community are as follows:

- Increase economic redevelopment/jobs
- Develop long-range plans for economic redevelopment of neighborhood business districts and downtown
- Protect and expand economic development and stability
- Plan long term city growth and redevelopment in a comprehensive manner
- Clarify and improve City identity and physical appearance
- Keep quality of community services high
- Keep community safe
- Encourage development of cultural heritage and arts/culture
- Protect and expand community identity
- Improve quality of life
- Pursue funding and implementation
- Develop and implement healthy and sustainable economic development initiatives throughout City
- Balance land uses to protect existing development to add value and quality
- Revitalize and strengthen neighborhood business centers
- Protect residential neighborhoods from deterioration and blight
- Protect and expand parks and green spaces
- Encourage affordable and balanced housing
- Encourage a variety of land uses to meet the needs of a diverse community
- Develop and coordinate community service programs to serve and encourage civic engagement, residential involvement, participation and betterment
- Ensure the health and well-being of the community and encourage community participation, ownership and involvement, ensuring the changing needs of the city's residents are reflected in its social programs and facilities