



XI. GOVERNMENT

The City of Richmond will strengthen governmental leadership and vision by taking a proactive role in the future growth of Richmond. The City government and leadership shall foster trust and support for public and private partnering. The City of Richmond departments and agencies that facilitate managed growth and future planning will promote community and be citizen accessible.

XI. GOVERNMENT

A. Introduction

The local government of Richmond, Indiana is of vital importance to the welfare of the citizens and community. The purpose of government is to serve, protect, and guide the public interests by developing, authorizing, and promoting the establishment, implementation, and performance of public services and comprehensive planning efforts. The city has a fiduciary public duty and interest in assisting, developing, promoting, and sustaining the community. City officials serve the citizens of this community through effective leadership and necessary services. These services include: code enforcement, and development approvals including zoning, design guidelines, annexation, historic preservation, and signage.



Richmond Municipal Building
Source: waynet.org

The City has an essential role in protecting and preserving the natural resources, the built environment, and the vital areas and assets of the community including its neighborhoods, business districts, and public facilities. The Comprehensive Plan reviews and makes recommendations regarding the government and its organizational structure in order to facilitate and organize the management and legislative process of the community.

B. Goal and Objectives

Goal

The City of Richmond will work for the safety, health and welfare of all their citizens through intergovernmental cooperation. All city department and county agencies will work together to become a development friendly city that encourages and promotes quality, cost-effective, and sustainable development, which promotes an excellent quality of life.

Objectives

1. Develop a mission statement for the Department of Metropolitan Development. Create an inter-departmental mission statement reflecting a commitment to well-managed development.
2. Revise structure of code administration in accordance with the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Revisions will facilitate development in the City of Richmond by making the application, permitting, and inspection processes faster for the applicant and easier to administer. The City should aim to make the codes, permit and application processes more understandable and accessible to the public.

3. Develop, update, and review current regulatory codes and ordinances that meet the spirit and intent of sustainable quality development, while meeting the goals of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Richmond.
4. Improve leadership, delegation, and customer service in the development application process, including review, permitting, and inspections. Empower, educate, and encourage staff at all levels to make reasonable and intelligent decisions.
5. Establish a central clearinghouse and information center for all development applications, permitting and inspections.
6. Strengthen county-city review processes. Improve the coordination process between the city, county, and state governments, with businesses and the community.
7. Encourage and develop mechanisms for coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.

C. Organization/Regulatory Structure

Issues and Findings

Richmond is classified as a Second Class City under Indiana State Code. According to Indiana Code 28-7-1, a second-class city has a population of 35,001 to 599,999, first-class cities have populations of 600,000 or more, and third-class cities have populations of 2,001 to 35,000. Richmond is the 17th largest city in Indiana. It is governed by a City Council of nine members and a full time Mayor and City Clerk, all elected for four-year terms. The Department of Metropolitan Development and the Wayne County Department of Planning and Zoning provide the code enforcement, development review, permitting, and inspections. An overview of the City of Richmond and Wayne County responsibilities and procedures regarding development processes is described below.

City of Richmond Department of Metropolitan Development Development Review Administration

The City's Department of Metropolitan Development was organized by Mayor Sally Hutton in 2005 to integrate three city offices: Planning, Permits & Inspections, and Community Development into one umbrella department to oversee these community development functions.

The Department of Metropolitan Development is responsible for processing incoming development applications, and it works with the Advisory Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals in making recommendations on built environment and community planning issues. The department provides staff reviews and recommendations, plus advises on projects that involve a change of zoning, variance of use, or variance of development standards. The recommendations of the Department are guided by the Comprehensive Plan and by proven planning practices. Special considerations are made to select issues. Staff reviews preliminary site plans, parking requirements, visual enhancement district concerns, landscaping plans and questionable zoning situations. When a project cannot meet development standards or is not appropriately zoned, staff will help to determine if a variance can be granted for the project, or a portion of the project. This variance is based on the Department's assessment of an applicant's hardship. This is resolved by means of a physical non-conformance condition of the site or structure, which does not negatively affect public health, safety, comfort, morals, convenience, or general public welfare.

The head of the Permits and Inspections Office of the Department of Metropolitan Development is the Building Commissioner. This person oversees code violations and permits for new construction in the city. The City of Richmond Department of Metropolitan Development administers and enforces development review processes, building permits and inspections, plus the zoning and subdivision codes

The Planning Office, as part of the Department of Metropolitan Development, reviews all development applications and consults with other city departments in its processing of proposed development or redevelopment projects. The City Planner oversees the review of development applications, permits, and variances.

A summary of the departments and their roles:

- **Law** – ordinance preparation and provides legal council to the Plan Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals and all other city boards and commissions as well as to City staff on proposed developments, and provides interpretation of City Code and counsel on procedural issues;
- **Engineering** – for conformance with city engineering standards;
- **Police** – for advice on potential traffic safety issues with development layout;
- **Fire** – for advice about site access for emergency situations, sufficient hydrants or need for more fire stations near new developments;
- **Community Development** - to learn if project might conflict with other projects the City is funding;
- **Permits & Inspections** – to review applications for outstanding permitting issues from a construction or maintenance standpoint;
- **Sanitary District** – to confirm new development can sufficiently handle storm water and waste issues;
- **Mayor** – to determine whether project conflicts with his/her administrative goals.

The Planning Office coordinates and consults with outside agencies on development applications. This includes the Neighborhood Services Clearinghouse about specific neighborhood issues and Main Street Richmond-Wayne County on issues that impact the downtown. Neighborhood Services Clearinghouse provides volunteers to assist the City with code enforcement issues in the neighborhoods. The City of Richmond also consults with the Well-Head Protection Committee when development impacts Richmond’s aquifer. The following departments are generally not consulted by the Metropolitan Development Department regarding development applications or variances: Human Resources, Purchasing, Finance, Parks & Recreation, Human Rights Office, Roseview Transit Authority, Airport, and the Street Department.

Design Review Process

The Historic Review Board lacks a design review process for neighborhoods or projects in the City of Richmond. The City lacks historic district designation, so development of this process is not a priority. Furthermore, there is a local conservation district -Singin' Sam House- without design standards. The planning staff reviews "Planned Unit Development" applications, but there is no particular standard except the requirement for a ten-foot landscape buffer. A "visual enhancement district" is identified on the existing zoning map, but the guidelines only pertain to the "vegetation density per linear feet of frontage." There are no specific design related elements, such as a requirement for a particular plants or species.

Permits and Inspections Office

The Permits & Inspections Office is responsible for building permits and code enforcement. Applicants seeking an Improvement Location Permit (ILP) for building projects bring their plans to the office where they are reviewed by the Administrative Assistant to determine if they meet the code. This office also issues property addresses for parcels within the city limits, and verifies flood plain sites. The building permit process is three to six months to complete from the time the application is submitted until the City issues a permit. A building permit requires a zoning release from the Department of Metropolitan Development, plus related information on zoning restrictions, parking requirements, and landscape enhancement requirements.

Community Development Department

The Community Development Office is responsible for writing and monitoring grants for various City programs and City needs, such as the Roseview Transit Authority or the procurement of equipment for the police and fire departments.

Advisory Plan Commission

The Advisory Plan Commission is established and authorized by Indiana law, IC 36-7-4-202 which allows second-class cities to establish an advisory plan commission. The City of Richmond Advisory Plan Commission has eleven members and is charged with reviewing and approving land use requests, such as a Special Use Rezoning and Planned Unit Development overlay districts. Recommendations are made for City Council to approve or deny such applications. The Advisory Plan Commission's major function is to develop a comprehensive development plan for public structures, utilities, streets, and public lands and to regulate and classify land and its uses through zoning.

Rezoning is approved by City Council based on recommendations from the planning staff and the Richmond Advisory Plan Commission. Recommendations are based on changing conditions of the area, goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, and modern planning practices.

The Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board consists of five community members who are appointed by the Mayor, City Council, and the Planning Commission. The Board meets monthly at a public hearing, to hear debate, and approve or deny zoning appeal applications. Factors and considerations include special exceptions, variances, and appeals from the zoning ordinance. Relevant information is prepared and presented to the Board by an administrative official, hearing officer, staff member, or administrative board designated by the ordinance.

Two Mile Fringe Applications

When a project is within the two-mile fringe of the City's municipal boundary, then the County's Director of Development and the County Engineer are consulted to determine if the development conflicts with the County's comprehensive plan. Additionally, when a subdivision is planned within the two-mile fringe, the City of Richmond consults with the County Highway Engineer to determine if the development should meet City or County road standards per Subdivision Ordinance 153.06 c1 (B).

Wayne County Government

Elected county officials include three county commissioners, seven members of the county council, auditor, treasurer, Circuit Court judge, three Superior Court judges, prosecuting attorney, sheriff, coroner, recorder, assessor, and surveyor.

Wayne County Planning and Zoning Department

Wayne County adopted its first zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance on October 30, 1967. On March 10, 1993, a new zoning ordinance was adopted. On April 21, 1993, a new subdivision ordinance was adopted. In 1967, the first comprehensive master plan was adopted. In 1992, the comprehensive master plan currently in use was adopted. That plan is currently being updated. Amendments made to the current plan reflect the changes needed by community. The Wayne County Planning & Zoning office's function is assisting the public by explaining zoning regulations and the facilitating the application process. The Planning Office administers, interprets, and enforces the zoning and subdivision regulations of the County. It keeps property records in regard to zoning issues, Board of Zoning Appeals and Advisory Plan Commission petition files, and zoning maps.

This office performs the following duties: determines flood plain locations and zone districts, issues Improvement Location Permits (ILP), mails violation letters, processes driveway applications, provides information regarding the zone and subdivision ordinances, plus provides setback requirements for landowner's building projects, Board of Zoning Appeals and Advisory Plan Commission petitions. In addition, this department performs research, documents, and corresponds regarding all of these issues. The office educates the public by performing these duties, while explaining to the public the proper uses for their property, plus their rights and responsibilities as property owners. Finally, the Planning & Zoning Office works closely with the Building Commission, Surveyor's Office, Health Department, Plat Room, and Recorder's Office by providing them with necessary information. City officials use this information to make informed decisions in order to administer the zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Wayne County Building Commission

The Building Commission consists of a Director of Development, two Code Officials, and an Administrative Assistant. This office works closely with the Planning and Zoning Department in assisting the public with their residential and commercial building projects.

The number one goal is to ensure that construction within the unincorporated areas of Wayne County meets the Building Codes of Wayne County, which in turn, the State of Indiana adopted, thus providing at least "...minimum standards for the protection of life, limb, health, environment, public safety and welfare, and for the conservation of energy in the design and construction of buildings and structures..." (From Section 58.02 PURPOSE of Chapter 58: Wayne County Building Code).

Townships

There are fifteen townships in Wayne County. Each township has an elected assessor who works with the County Assessor to maintain fair and accurate property assessment information. In smaller townships, the Township Assessor also serves as the Township Trustee.

City of Richmond Departments and Functions

The City of Richmond is a municipal government and is organized as a Mayor-Council form of government. This is the oldest, most common form of municipal government. The Mayor holds an executive office over department heads (fire, police, etc.) responsible to him. The Mayor is elected by the citizens and serves a 4-year term. The City Council enacts laws, confirms or rejects mayoral appointments, and may override the Mayor's decision to veto by a majority vote. City Council members are elected at large and by district in rotation of one to four year terms.

Office of the Mayor

The Mayor oversees the city departments and provides direct leadership to the City of Richmond by overseeing all City departments to accomplish goals and establish priorities. The Mayor's Office works closely with department heads, supervisors, and managers to bring about the best plan of action for the City and the citizens of Richmond. The Mayor also receives citizens' complaints or questions about City services, as well as requests from the public to appear and speak at meetings and special events. The Mayor's Office speaks at public events and gives proclamations to commemorate or honor individuals, special events, organizations, and holidays.

City Clerk

The City Clerk maintains all city records, documents and actions, ordinances, resolutions, agreements, contracts, deeds and minutes. The City Clerk is elected by the citizens and serves a 4-year term. The Office of the City Clerk maintains and preserves the integrity of the City's records that relate to Common Council, Richmond Power and Light, plus the Board of Public Works and Safety documents actions, ordinances, resolutions, agreements, contracts, deeds, and minutes. These records are readily available to the citizens of Richmond, outside agencies, general public and all other City personnel.

The Office of the City Clerk is often a citizen's first point of contact with the Municipal Government, either on the phone or over the counter, who seeks information about this organization or about other agencies. Accurate referrals to other agencies are provided if the information that is being sought does not involve the City organization. The City Clerk's Office maintains all records, documents on a timely basis, and works to disseminate information as requested. Ongoing responsibilities include answering the general Municipal Building phone line, accepting public record act requests, handling subpoenas and summons, preparing information and agenda packets for both the City Council and Board of Public Works and Safety, plus acting as recording secretary for City Council. The Office of the City Clerk also administers bus passes, parking permits, collection of fines for non-vehicular violations, fire alarm permits, dog tags, handicapped signs, and renewal fees.

City of Richmond Departments list of Main Functions

Fire Department

- Firefighting
- Emergency Medical Services
- Confined Space Rescue
- Water Rescue
- Hazardous Material Protection
- Youth and adult education and fire safety
- Courtesy help inspections

Police Department

- Crime investigation
- Public safety
- Animal Control
- Assistance with developing Neighborhood Crime Watch programs
- Police Citizen's Academy for adults and youth
- Vehicular Citations and Violations

Roseview Transit

- Public Transportation
- Para-transit for senior citizens and persons with disabilities
- Buses stop on any corner, just wave at bus

Street Department

- Maintenance of streets, concrete walks, potholes and curbs
- Street tree maintenance
- Roadway sign replacement and repair
- Snow and ice removal
- Leaf collection and disposal
- Provide road barriers
- Provides 24 hour on call service
- Special events controls such as parades

Engineering Department

- Development Permits
- Drainage Issues
- Storm Water and Drainage Issue
- Sanitary Sewer Issues
- City Maps

Department Of Metropolitan Development

- Community Development
 - Writes and oversees grants
- Permits and Inspections
 - Exterior maintenance complaints for private property
 - Zoning violations
 - Building permits and inspections
- Planning
 - Oversees Zoning matters
 - Petitions for Variances of Use and Variances of Development Standards
 - Petitions for Rezoning and Special Use Permitting
- Housing

Department Of Law

- Oversight of legal issues for City
- Prepares Ordinances and Resolutions to go before Common Council
- Prepares Contracts for all departments in the City

Human Rights Office

- Protection of rights of Richmond Citizens in area of employment, public accommodations, public conveniences, housing education and real property acquisition
- Tracking of hate crimes
- Has no authority over governmental and federal agencies

Sanitary District

- Disposal of paints and household chemicals
- Weekly trash pick-ups
- Special trash pick-ups
- Maintains sewer system
- Operates local landfill
- Recycling
- Roll off container leasing

Parks and Recreation

- Maintain neighborhood parks
- Provide community and youth recreation programs
- Reserve and rent park facilities
- Maintain Cordell Municipal Pool & softball diamonds

Finance

- Maintains budget for City of Richmond
- Generates Payroll for City Employees
- Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable

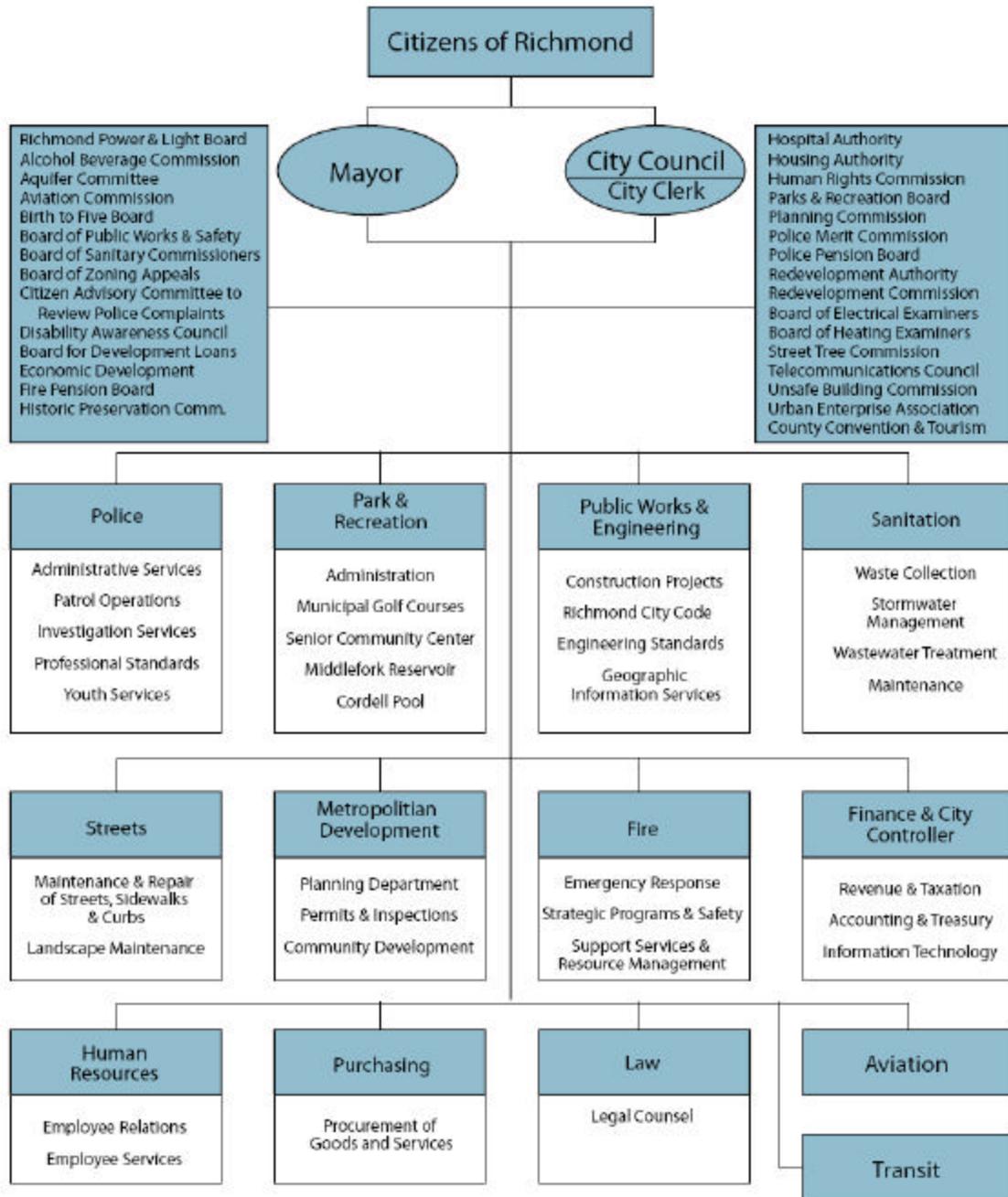
Purchasing

- Issues Purchase Orders for City Departments
- Obtains Bids from Vendors for City Projects

Human Resources

- Maintains personnel records for City Employees
- Oversight of Employee Benefits

Organization of the City of Richmond



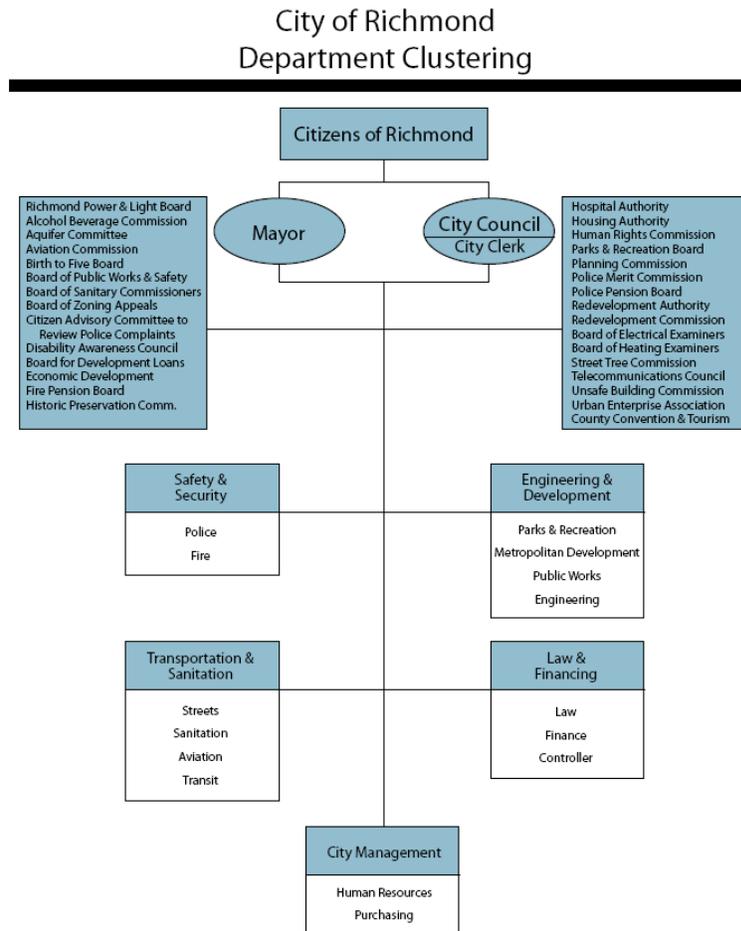
Strategies and Recommendations

G O 1. Establish a Coordinated and Streamlined Development Review Process, and Development Review Committee

Establish a development review process and a government review committee that includes representatives from the City of Richmond and Wayne County. The committee membership shall include City and County officials and/or department representatives who will make decisions related to the project. This is to include empowered representatives from all assigned departments to promote consistency and communication regarding developments. This development review process, which is to be linked to the GIS system, will establish a coordinated effort between all city departments and the County. The review process is to establish concise and clear roles for each of the participating departments, protocol and procedures, regular review schedule meetings, and responsibilities. The process is to be readily accessible to the public. After committee meetings, staff should consolidate and prioritize comments, plus send written communication to the applicant outlining their responsibilities with a projected deadline. These deadlines are necessary for processing and completing the project within a short period of time.

G O 2. Consider Reorganization of City Departments into Clusters

Consider reorganizing city departments into a cluster-oriented organizational structure. This is to ease communication on similar but not necessarily related issues, which will help to promote a more unified voice. Departments are to remain autonomous within each cluster.



G O 3. Establish a One Stop Shop for Development Review, Permitting and Inspections Process

Develop a “One Stop Shop” for all permits, inspections, and development review. This “One Stop Shop” is to be located in one City Department, such as the Department of Metropolitan Development. Consider the following:

- A customer service desk is to be open and staffed to accept applications and answer questions during regular business hours.
- Develop customer service performance standards, including specific goals and objectives for timely processing of applications, meeting set schedules for approving projects, responding to inquiries within 24 hours, monitoring the completeness of first reviews, and keeping staff accountable, while on track to meet turn-around schedules.
- Develop customer service training for staff.
- Computerize the City’s review process and make it available on-line on the City’s web site. Adopt standards to allow electronic submission of plans and applications.
- Develop a fast track plans review process to notify applicants of significant deficiencies as soon as they are discovered.
- Develop a voluntary fast track process through the use of pre-design and pre-construction meetings. Include representatives from all departments and assign a single contact person throughout the permitting process.
- Improve coordination between plans examiners, inspectors, and the Department of Metropolitan Development.
- Create a development review, permitting, inspection operating procedures manual. The manual is to include written policies and procedures for staff/department handling of the development review process.
- Send notices to professional organizations when procedures have been revised.
- Register all contractors that work in the city for communications purposes.
- Develop a newsletter/communication piece to communicate with contractors.

G O 4. Prepare Orientation Materials and Periodic Training Sessions to the Advisory Plan Commission Members, the Board of Zoning Appeals Members and City Council Members

The Department of Metropolitan Development is to prepare orientation materials on planning; development review, best practices, codes and procedures, and is to provide periodic training sessions to all commission members. The members are to be given an orientation packet and an overview session explaining their roles and responsibilities. The training is to educate them on sound and current planning principles and practices.

G O 5. The Department of Metropolitan Development Should Develop a Method and Practice of Recording Interpretations and Precedents

The Department of Metropolitan Development is to keep a log or manual of all interpretations and precedents that will be used to assist future decision-making. The log or manual is to be organized electronically, both chronologically and by code and be linked to the GIS system. The log is to be readily available to all planning staff, all departments, the city law director, any outside counsel, and to the County.

G O 6. Policies Should Be Developed for the City of Richmond, Wayne County, and Nearby Communities to Cooperate Together.

The City is to develop more integral working relationships with departments in Wayne County in order to implement the policies of the comprehensive plan. Staff and policy boards are to meet frequently to arrive at agreements that will result in implementation of the plan. Such joint efforts are especially helpful in addressing policies of the natural resources, community appearance, land use, and transportation elements of the comprehensive plan. The City of Richmond, Wayne County, and other nearby jurisdictions including Centerville are to develop policies to cooperate on:

- General zoning ordinances, land division ordinances, and building permits.
- Municipal violations, such as speeding, parking, and stray animals.
- Conservation ordinances.
- Official maps, and certified survey maps.
- Wetlands, floodplains, and agricultural preservation ordinances.
- Erosion control and construction site ordinances.
- Sanitary sewer/private septic system/storm water management ordinance.
- GIS System.

G O 7. Establish Two-Mile Fringe Committee

A Two-Mile Fringe Committee, composed of pertinent members from both the City and County, is to be established for the purpose of reviewing plans and projects proposed for the two-mile fringe area. The U-Plan meeting process recognized the need for intergovernmental cooperation. Participants are not suggesting that the two-mile fringe area become incorporated into the City of Richmond, rather they are recognizing the significant impact that the city and surrounding areas have on each other.

G O 8. Cooperate With Federal and State Governments in Joint Activities

The City is to cooperate more with federal and state governments to take advantage of non-local sources of funding, to make use of equipment and expertise not available in the city, and to help address issues that extend beyond the geographic limits of the city. Such joint efforts are especially helpful in addressing policies of the natural resources, parks and recreation, economic development, tourism, public works, and transportation elements of the comprehensive plan. Cooperation occurs in data gathering, studies, and construction projects.

G O 9. Implement The Comprehensive Plan – Delegate Staff and Resources.

The City is to evaluate and delegate staff as needed to implement the objectives and strategies of the comprehensive plan. Consideration is to be given for forming an Executive Committee of primary department heads affected by the plan, plan commission representatives, economic development interests, and education representatives to discuss the implementation of the plan.

G O 10. Develop a Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

The City is to develop an overall capital improvement program for the entire City, including all the departments and utility companies and work in conjunction with Wayne County and the State of Indiana Department of Transportation in developing short term and long range capital improvement plans. City council’s annual budgetary process is to incorporate timely recommendations from the plan commission regarding the capital improvements program. The plan commission’s advice is based on its understanding of the comprehensive plan and how certain capital expenditures may best be used to implement the CIP’s goals and objectives.

G O 11. Continue To Explore Innovative Ways To Pay For The Implementation of The Comprehensive Plan

The City is to investigate all reasonable opportunities to raise the funds necessary to implement the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan. In doing so, the City is to seek financing methods that are equitable and cost-effective. The opportunities to be explored include development impact fees, public/private partnerships, and grants from other levels of government and non-profit organizations.

G O 12. Seek to Maximize Public Involvement

The City is to develop opportunities to involve the public in their government. The City can take advantage of its technological innovations, such as an interactive web site, while continuing to use its traditional methods of promoting public awareness about their local government.

G O 13. Involve Students as Citizens in Local Government and Agency Programs

The City is to continue to develop programs and opportunities for students to participate as citizens in “real-life” local issues and programs, including City Council, historic preservation, transportation, neighborhood involvement, the elderly, plus community and social welfare.

G O 14. Examine the Need to Develop a Stand Alone Department to Support The Functioning of the Municipal Airport.

The City is to explore and assess the need to develop and organize a new department to coordinate the Richmond Municipal Airport and all aviation functions. This department will be responsible for all planning and funding, plus engineering issues related to the Airport or any aviation function.

G O 15. Examine the Need to Develop a Stand Alone Department to Support the Functioning of the City’s Communications and Information Technology

The City is to explore and assess the need to develop and organize a new department to support the functioning and coordination of all internal communications, computer, and information technology. This department will be responsible for all functions, planning, funding, and computer related issues.