



XV. IMPLEMENTATION

“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably will themselves not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die.”

Daniel Burnham, Architect [1846-1912]

Planner; World’s Columbian Exposition Chicago 1893 and Architect; Richmond Train Depot 1902

XV. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Introduction

The intent of the City of Richmond Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and promote the vibrancy of the community through its planning efforts. The Comprehensive Plan develops goals, objectives and recommended strategies for the City to develop a strong and diversified economy, to develop enhanced community services and housing opportunities for all residents, to maintain a green and sustainable environment, and to coordinate an efficient transportation system that supports Richmond's future. The Comprehensive Plan describes and analyzes each element of the community and recommends goals, objectives, strategies and implementation tools to guide its future planning.

Successful implementation is critical in ensuring that the plan has a marked impact on the community. The City of Richmond Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a working document that will guide community leaders in making decisions, establishing priorities, and committing to actions that will positively affect the future of the City.

This section is one of the most important sections of the plan since it identifies how the goals, objectives, and strategies in the plan will be carried out. It does this by identifying a time frame for implementing the recommendations. Specifically, the implementation section should achieve the following:

- Determine the action steps to carry out the recommendations/strategies of the plan
- Set up the short and long-term time frames for accomplishing the strategies of the plan
- Delegate responsibilities for implementing the plan (most of the responsibility will fall on the owner of the plan but could also identify potential leaders)
- Provide a framework for updating the plan as needed

The plan implementation will focus on the two primary functions of the Comprehensive Plan:

1. It provides the policy foundation for all city decisions regarding land use, transportation, and other plan elements. The question "What does the Comprehensive Plan have to say about this?" should be asked and answered in ongoing activities of the City such as reviewing rezoning requests and setting capital budgets.
2. It is the community's "to do" list. The Plan's influence on Richmond's future will be a product of the motivating power of the shared vision it communicates and the effectiveness of actions taken to realize the vision. The vision will be realized by steady progress in adhering to a well-defined "game plan" that sets priorities for effective short and long-term actions.

The City of Richmond Department of Metropolitan Development is responsible for the maintenance and update of the Comprehensive Plan. This is accomplished through annual monitoring of plan implementation, and processing of amendments to revise and update the plan as needed. This department also reviews proposed land development regulations for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The Department of Metropolitan Development is also charged with directly implementing the Comprehensive Plan directives.

B. How to Use the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be used on a daily basis as public and private decisions are made concerning development, redevelopment, capital improvements, economic incentives, and other matters affecting the community's growth. Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be partially driven by the availability of resources (staff and/or funds) sufficient to guarantee success. This section summarizes the ways in which the Plan will be used.

Guidelines for Updating a Comprehensive Plan

The Plan should be reviewed and/or updated every 5 years over the life of the Plan. Goals/Objectives and policies shall not be revised without public input. Changes should be made in the original document but could also be made as an addendum or separate report.

Items to Review and Update in a Comprehensive Plan

There are several items to review and update in a Comprehensive Plan. This section identifies those areas of the Plan that should be updated every five years.

Changes to Demographics/Existing Conditions

The existing conditions section or the part of the plan containing demographics is one of the areas where change always occurs. New census figures come out every ten years and estimates are prepared regularly. Plans that get adopted prior to the release of new census data should be reviewed after the data gets released in order to contain the most current and accurate data. Typically, plans that get prepared prior to new census data, have to rely on the previous census or on estimates. The community may want to consult the Wayne County Economic Development Corporation for estimates of demographics and use those in the plan. Data that should be reviewed and revised includes:

- Population data
- Unemployment data
- Large employer data
- Housing data (i.e. number of units)

Review of Implementation

Another area for review and update is the action agenda/implementation strategies. As items are implemented, it is good to note those by providing some way to record what has occurred or what is planned. A regular report on implementation is a good way to discuss what has been implemented and the community should also keep a record of implementation actions that are completed. The review should also focus on those items that have not been implemented.

Review of What is Working/What is Not Working

It is also important to review what is working in the plan and what is not. When implemented, if the goals, objectives, and policies are having the opposite effect, they should be reviewed and modified. If the goals, objectives, and policies need to be revised or rewritten, this should be coordinated by the Department of Metropolitan Development.

Review of Maps

The maps within the Comprehensive Plan should also be regularly reviewed and revised if necessary.

Work Programs and Budgets

City departments and administrators should review their annual work programs and budgets according to the policies and recommendations presented in the Comprehensive Plan. Numerous objectives and strategies can be implemented in this way. As the City budget is prepared and reviewed, it should use the plan as a guide to ensure capital and operational investments are consistent with the plan and its growth priorities.

Development Approvals

Administrative approvals relative to development should be strongly predicated on the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Administrative and organizational recommendations in particular should be followed in considering zoning decisions. But, a degree of flexibility will be necessary to ensure that decisions are made based on current circumstances, which may dictate flexibility in applying plan policies. Major deviations that are not consistent with the plan will require a formal amendment of the Comprehensive Plan.

Educating the Community

The Department of Metropolitan Development will administer the Comprehensive and will be responsible for communication the Plan to the public. The Plan will be posted on the City's web site. Copies of the Executive Summary will be available in City Hall. Copies of the full Comprehensive Plan will be available at City Hall and the Library.

Annual Report

The Metropolitan Development Department will issue a report each January beginning in 2007 that summarizes the status of each objective and strategy relative to implementation. It will also note the status of the major assumptions that underlay the Plan, such as population levels. The report will be presented to the Advisory Plan Commission and City Council, and will be available to the public.

Amending the Plan

If the Plan Commission and City Council support a development proposal that would markedly deviate from the Comprehensive Plan's policies, a formal amendment of the respective Plan policy would be required. Such an amendment should cite in the ordinance the facts that support the amendment. Such amendments should be weighed very carefully. The Plan Commission will provide a recommendation regarding each amendment, prior to Council's action. It is suggested that the Department of Metropolitan Development circulate each proposed amendment and request comments prior to City Council's consideration of such amendments.

Interpreting the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is the set of official City policies to manage development and growth, and the implementing strategies that together establish a vision of the City for the future. The narrative that explains specific objectives and strategies provides insight to the thinking behind those policies. Changing circumstances could influence the interpretation of a policy, but that should only occur where the broader goals and principles of the Plan are consistently followed.

Implementation Matrix

An Implementation Matrix will be used by the Department of Metropolitan Development. The matrix is intended to guide the City's implementation of the Richmond Comprehensive Plan. They are organized by the chapters of the Comprehensive Plan: Economic Development, Downtown, City Image and Identity, Community Services, Education, Parks and Recreation Transportation, Government, Housing, Sustainability and Conservation and Land Use. The matrix summarizes the objectives and associated strategies for each chapter of the Plan.

Specific strategies are listed with a recommended time frame to complete the task by. Responsible parties are indicated for those objectives and strategies with such information. Other items are policies for which that information is not as specific.