

VI. CITY IMAGE AND IDENTITY

The City of Richmond intends to become one of the Midwest’s finest mid-sized cities renowned as a desirable place to live, work and play. Richmond will become known as the city that cares about maintaining the careful balance of a healthy community through four guiding areas of focus; employment, education, housing and culture. The City will be renowned for the arts and cultural community it sustains and for attracting tourism through its destinations, events and amenities. The City of Richmond shall be celebrated for its genuine “sense of place” through a unique image brand identity that is regionally recognized. Appropriate design guidance mechanisms accentuate the importance of preserving the past through conservation and historic preservation while recognizing the future through quality “context sensitive” contemporary development and design. This approach ensures the continuance of the unique qualities of Richmond’s neighborhoods while respecting Richmond’s sustainable development philosophy for now and future citizens.

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A. Introduction

The character of Richmond is the visual personality that defines the city. The edges, corridors, neighborhoods, city center, open space and the various districts all help to mold the character of the City. The character of Richmond is grounded in history through the rich collection of historic architecture in the downtown, public buildings, institutions such as Earlham College and landmarks throughout the city. Those individuals involved in the creation of this Comprehensive Plan have clearly stated that historic preservation of Richmond's heritage assets is very important to the character and image of the city and should be woven into the City's community development standards. This desire is heightened because of the concern that the rich character so important to the city is being threatened through the erosion of the historic fabric and the minimum architectural standards for new construction. This combination is having a negative effect on the character of the city and sends the wrong message to residents, visitors and business interests regarding Richmond as a place to live, work and play. A development philosophy for the future will allow all public officials, governing boards and private development interests to act accordingly in a consolidated effort to protect the character of Richmond through conservation methodologies and appropriate new construction. This approach will contribute to the aesthetic qualities of Richmond as well as the long-term sustainability of place.



Source: KKG

Richmond's image is that collection of visual memories that a visitor or resident uses to recall or to describe to others the character or personality of the city. This image could be positive or negative but typically includes both perspectives. Obviously, it is in the city's best interest to develop and maintain a positive image for the purpose of market appeal, goodwill advertising and a feeling of pride that transcends the residents of Richmond.



Morrisson Reeves Library
Source: waynet.org

Generally speaking, a community's image is heavily influenced by the image of its central city area [typically downtown] because of the symbolic nature of the historic heart of the community. For many, downtown represents Richmond's personality and establishes its brand identity for the world to see.

The first impressions a traveler has about a city are often linked to the entry corridors at the corporate boundaries leading into the city. Often times the opportunity to express a gateway or point of arrival is driven by available public land where signing or welcome features can be positioned. Other more developed points of interest such as Glenn Miller Park, Richmond High School, memorable streets, and public facilities such as the airport, City Hall, the Wayne County Courthouse, the Public Library, and museums serve as important image builders. However, private development can play an important role in the image of the city because of the influence of a prominent location, quality architecture, greenspace and environmental built elements such as signing, art, lighting and site design.

The primary and secondary entry points into the city need to convey an attractive, welcoming appeal. These points should be visually and physically enhanced to convey a sense of pride, innovation and community. The city should collaborate where possible with private business to partner on these image building enhancements.

Downtown Richmond is arguably the most identifiable image maker within the city. The central business district, the shops and historic buildings which line Main Street, the wonderful collection of churches and the adjacent neighborhoods themselves are examples of the many physical elements which together define the city's image. The colors, textures, materials, architecture, cleanliness, public spaces, and the skyline of the downtown area help establish a distinctive, recognizable image. Major businesses like Tom Raper RV and institutions such as Earlham College, IU East and Reid Medical Center all contribute to Richmond's image to the world.



Main Street looking West from 9th Street North Side of Street
Source: waynet.org

A positive image and brand identity for Richmond symbolizes the value of the city and the quality of life one can expect from living and working in Richmond. The aesthetic appeal of the city will also contribute to the sustained economic growth of Richmond by conveying a "community on the rise" message to existing and new businesses that want to call Richmond home.

This attention to community aesthetics and image also helps to broaden and expand the local work force by attracting new residents seeking a quality environment to live, work and play.

Additionally, heritage tourism and regional conferences, trade shows and sporting tournaments are drawn to communities that convey this quality of place in addition to short-term visitors all of which strengthen the local economy.

Once considered a luxury, urban design and image is now understood as an essential strategy in maintaining the character and desirability of a city environment. Elaborate design amenities are not generally necessary in a small city, but strategic improvements to Richmond's physical appearance will have a significant impact on the perception of its identity and image.

B. Goal and Objectives

Goal

The City of Richmond is Indiana’s Eastern Gateway along Interstate 70 and provides a unique fusion of old and new built environment for its residents, visitors and business interests to experience. The city will use its historic fabric as a foundation to model new, appropriate and imaginative development to contribute to this unique sense of place.

Objectives

1. Enhance the market perceptions of Richmond through a creative image building program.
2. Recruit the primary organizations and corporations within Richmond for intellectual and financial support of an image building campaign.
3. Develop a strong feeling of pride and ownership for the identifiable districts and special places within the city through community buy-in and support of the image building program.
4. Develop a palette of materials, icons and community design themes for inclusion in the image building program and within the physical enhancements strategically positioned at key points of entry to the city.
5. Develop design guidelines.
6. Develop a graphic identity and wayfinding signage program for the city that incorporates the imagery listed above into a coordinated, creative information system.
7. Refer to the district’s name repeatedly when describing or referencing the district in any communication.
8. Work with Chamber of Commerce’s community pride program, “One Great Community Campaign” that highlights the many positives about the community.
9. Develop a corridor analysis/enhancement program for primary and secondary corridors.
10. Encourage neighborhood and community involvement in city identity projects.
11. Encourage sustainability and smart growth principles in developing city image and identity programs.

C. Districts



Source: KKG

Issues and Findings

Districts are those areas of a city that are recognized through a collection of buildings, a historic landmark or activities within that area that are commonly known throughout the region.

The City of Richmond has numerous areas that have evolved over time as districts such as the Depot District, Starr Historic District and Old Richmond.

The City has not taken full advantage of these special places from a marketing and economic development perspective and should consider the long-term economic benefit for the business districts. The ultimate beneficiary is the City through increased tax revenue and physical enhancements that will fuel others to invest. This long-term economic benefit should provide the City with a comfort level to justify the investment of resources into the districting program.

Strategies and Recommendations

D 1. Inventory All Districts Within the City

Develop a list and geographic / physical description of the districts within the City of Richmond as they exist today. This list will be used to determine if the districts are currently using a district identity for reference, orientation or marketing purposes.

D 2. Develop a Selection Criteria for the Purpose of Inclusion in the Districting Program

The City and others should establish a list of criteria for inclusion as a legitimate district in the city marketing and districting plan.

D 3. Develop a Marketing Program to Complement the Identity Program

A marketing program should be created to help to promote Richmond and showcase the district concept. The marketing plan can be used to describe the physical setting of each district, businesses within each district, services, etc., for increased awareness of the various shopping, entertainment and cultural destinations the city has to offer through the district identity program.

D 4. Develop a Leasing Strategy for all Business Districts

Develop a leasing strategy for all of the Business Districts to take advantage of each district's strengths. Thematic leasing will allow each district to express a particular retail, restaurant or entertainment niche that reinforces the unique physical and social character of the district.

D. Neighborhoods

Issues and Findings

Neighborhoods are the building block of a community. Richmond residents depend on their neighborhoods more than on any other part of the City for the quality of their lives. All neighborhoods should offer the same basic amenities and should be anchored by a focal point. This focal point could be a neighborhood business district or commercial node, a school, a park, a landmark or other memorable land use.

Richmond boasts a variety of diverse neighborhoods for its residents to call home and the City recognizes that different areas of the City have their own identity and character that residents want to preserve. There are 18 individual and distinct neighborhoods in Richmond many of which are organized through neighborhood associations.

Baxter Neighborhood

Located on the west side of Richmond, Baxter's boundaries are Northwest 5th Street to Sim Hodgkin Parkway and National Road to Northwest E Street. The heart of this neighborhood is the old elementary school that has been converted into the Early Learning Center. The Baxter neighborhood is nearly all residential with some concentrated commercial on the North and South boundaries. The housing stock is aging and is in need of better upkeep. New residents will feel welcome with the friendly neighbors but there is a lack of participation and communication neighborhood wide.

Depot District Neighborhood

The historical railroad depot district has struggled throughout the years in part because of the abandonment of the train depot. However, more recently, there has been some urban renewal and reinvestment from the private sector that has seen the potential of a revitalized depot district. The area is home to locally-owned restaurants and coffee shops, furniture stores, an Asian/Ethnic market, senior housing, a hardware store and more. The rehabilitation of the Atlas Building into senior housing and other multi-family rehabilitation projects have brought a heightened awareness of the district to light. The residential homes around the business area offer a nice transition to the adjacent Starr Historic District. Hopefully the continued revitalization of the business district can better support and bring continued investment to the neighborhood.



Depot District
Source: waynet.org

Elizabeth Starr Neighborhood

One of the most notable historical districts in the City, Elizabeth Starr encompasses the Starr Historic District and the Lions Park East. The boundaries of the neighborhood include the west side of North 16th Street to North 10th Street and North A Street to the railroad tracks. This neighborhood is known for its exemplary collection of historic homes and walkable streets, however, the residents are deeply concerned over the decrease in owner-occupied homes, communication and public participation throughout the neighborhood.

Fairview Neighborhood

The Fairview neighborhood is focused around the Fairview Elementary School and the centrally located Lions Park West. The neighborhood has industrial zoning along its north and south boundaries of Northwest F Street and Sheridan Street which hinders a broader market appeal as a desirable neighborhood. This large neighborhood has smaller, well-maintained homes with an avid neighborhood crime watch program. Of concern to the residents is the low neighborhood interest in resident communication and participation in the neighborhood association.

Greenwood Neighborhood

This neighborhood is made up primarily as an apartment complex located just north of Wernle and east of US-27 in the 5th quadrant. The Greenwood Apartment complex is bordered by South G Street, South 5th Street and South 23rd Street. The heart of this neighborhood is the Richardson Elementary School and the Boys and Girls Club, both located nearby. Again there is low communication and participation among residents of the complex.

Joseph Moore Neighborhood

Located west of the Gorge, the Joseph Moore neighborhood includes the Richmond High School and Earlham College. This quiet, well kept neighborhood is instilled with the good values of Earlham College. Joseph Moore's housing stock is small, affordable, and well-maintained. The neighborhood boundaries are College Avenue to Southwest 1st Street and Southwest E Street to National Road. The majority of this neighborhood is covered by the Earlham College campus along the east side.

Middlefork Area Neighborhood



Indiana University East Campus
Source: waynet.org

Within the northern section of the City limits and just west of the Middlefork Reservoir, the Middlefork Area neighborhood is home to many institutional uses, commercial and newer housing stock. Ivy Tech and Indiana University East are located in the northern part of this neighborhood along with newer subdivisions in the southern part. Big box commercial is located along the east side of US 27.

North Richmond Neighborhood

Just north of central downtown, the neighborhood of North Richmond is home to the Townsend Community Center, the North Richmond Community Center, a subsidized HUD housing project and the Community Police Center. These neighborhood facilities are the heart of the neighborhood with good neighbors who are active in the community's crime watch program. Too many

rental properties are largely to blame for the low maintained housing stock. North Richmond is located within North 8th Street to North 24th Street and North F Street to North J Street.

Old Richmond Neighborhood

The southern part of the downtown area is contiguous to the Old Richmond neighborhood. Located just south of South A Street, and bordered at South E Street, South 2nd Street and South 7th Street, Old Richmond is characterized as Richmond's oldest historic neighborhood. The wonderful streets are lined with charming historic homes whose owners take great pride in their upkeep. The neighborhood has a low to moderate crime rate that could be deterred further with more neighbor participation and communication.



Historic Old Richmond House
Source: wayneg.org

Park Lorraine Neighborhood

This neighborhood is the Park Lorraine apartment complex in the western part of the City in the 5th quadrant. It is located south of Main Street but east of Garwood and west of Interstate 70. It is conveniently located along the bus route and is known to have nice apartments and good management. Unfortunately community participation and communication are low and tenants tend to shy away from communal activities making the area feel less like a neighborhood. The focal point of the neighborhood is the above ground pool that is enjoyed by all.

Parkview Neighborhood

This clean, quiet neighborhood prides itself in having the state of the art playground located in Mary Scott Park. One of the two public middle schools is also located in Parkview. Dennis Middle School has some traffic flow issues around it and steps need to be taken to address the high speeds around the school. Located in the 2nd quadrant the Parkview neighborhood borders the National Road West, Peacock Road, 5th Street and 11th Street.

Reeveston Neighborhood

Another well known historic district, the Reeveston neighborhood is located within South 16th Street to South 23rd Street and South A Street to South E Street. The Reeveston neighborhood has many well-maintained older homes many of which are majestically positioned in estate style settings. Reeveston is arguably Richmond’s most prestigious neighborhood. This neighborhood boasts a low crime rate and clean streets while being home to the second middle school in Richmond. The traffic around Test Middle School is an issue along with the declining neighborhood edges.

Southside Neighborhood

This southern-most neighborhood is situated just east of US 27 in the 4th quadrant with the borders of South 8th Street to Liberty Avenue and South O Street to South Q Street. The Richmond Senior Center makes its home here in Southside. The recycling center, also located here, unfortunately leaves its presence with dirt and grime along with high traffic on South L Street. This neighborhood also offers smaller, more affordable homes.

Starr Parkside Neighborhood

Sandwiched in between Glen Miller Park and the Elizabeth Starr neighborhood, the Starr Parkside neighborhood is focused around the Starr Elementary School. Located in the 1st quadrant the Starr Parkside neighborhood also is home to the only skate park in Richmond as well as Bethesda Ministries and Interfaith Mission. This neighborhood boasts its proximity to Glen Miller Park and the public elementary and middle schools, making it easy for children to walk to school. Starr Parkside’s downfall, along with many other Richmond neighborhoods, is the declining housing stock and growing number of non-owner occupied units along with low resident participation and communication.



Bethesda Ministries
Source: waynet.org

Vaile Neighborhood

Centrally located close to downtown, the neighborhood of Vaile borders the Main Street and Reeveston neighborhood. In addition to Main Street, the other boundaries of Vaile are South G Street, South 9th Street and South 16th Street in the 5th quadrant.

Westview Neighborhood

Following its name, the Westview Neighborhood is located in the western part of the City just north of the National Road in the 2nd quadrant. The boundaries also include Northwest 13th Street to Northwest 20th Street and South of Peacock Road. This neighborhood is close to many recreational facilities along with Westview Elementary School. Clear Creek Park is positioned just to the east of the neighborhood with Cordell Swimming Pool and McBride Stadium. Traffic flow and speed around McBride Stadium are issues for the neighborhood and the community itself needs to work on participation and communication with fellow neighbors.

Strategies and Recommendations

N 1. Reinforce and Enhance the City's Neighborhoods Through Design Guidelines

Based on the neighborhood's unique character, create varying design guidelines, standards and requirements within and between the residential areas. Design guidelines should address setbacks, the ratio of scale, bulk and height of structures to lot area, landscaping and roadway and pedestrian features. These qualities will help ensure that new developments, or improvements to existing developments, are compatible with and enhance the character of development in surrounding sites.

N 2. Prevention and Alleviation of Traffic Impacts

The adverse impacts on residential neighborhoods should be minimized by discouraging the use of local streets by non-local traffic and providing alternative routes. Other preventative measures should be taken to reduce high traffic and speeds around schools should be a high priority in the neighborhoods. Context sensitive traffic calming design should be explored to reinforce the positive benefits of people friendly auto oriented environments.

N 3. Create Better Neighborhood Connections

Pedestrian movement in neighborhoods should be enhanced by encouraging the development of a system of paths and trails linking neighborhoods with each other, parks, open spaces, community centers, shopping and employment centers.

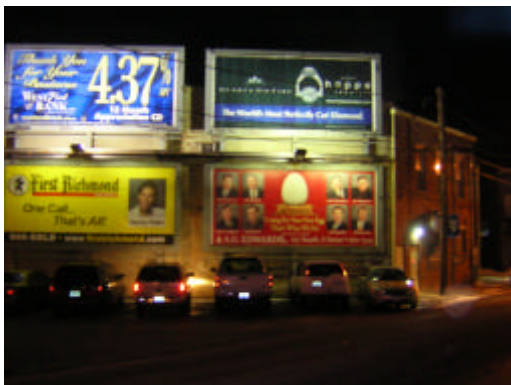
N 4. Encourage Neighborhood Participation

Public participation in decisions affecting the livability of neighborhoods shall be encouraged. Participation programs typically used by the City include town meetings, surveys, and public hearings. Other creative methods, such as videos and kids programs that attempt to reach residents who have not participated in neighborhood activities in the past are encouraged.

E. Gateways

Issues and Findings

Gateways are the significant points along entrance corridors leading into the city that demarcate the incorporated borders of the city. Gateways can also be developed to call attention to the significance of a special area within the city as in Downtown or a unique district. Richmond has two basic forms of gateway elements currently in an effort to call attention to the key entry points leading into the city. One is the brick entrance signs that have been erected along Routes 40 and 27 and Interstate 70 that display a welcome message to visitors entering the city. The other is the wayfinding signing system that was put in place several years ago but was later abandoned because of lack of support. Although these two gateway elements are steps in the right direction, the lack of design coordination with the two systems leaves the system less than successful.



Source: KKG

Strategies and Recommendations

G 1. Map the Gateway Arterials and Special Points for Physical Improvement

Perform mapping exercise to document preferred gateway locations and opportunities for greatest impact. Gateways do not necessarily mean a physical monument to establish the gateway. Open space, tasteful signing, special lighting, private development projects, natural features, landmarks and existing built elements can serve as gateway elements.

G 2. Identify Private Property & Development Interests as Support Resources

Develop a map that indicates strategically located key businesses and/or private development that offer opportunities to partner with the city for gateway/image enhancement projects. This work would set the foundation for a city image master plan.

G 3. Identify Building Materials, Design Icons and Thematic Message

Work with a professional design consultant to develop an appropriate palette of building materials, colors, iconic elements to be the “visual voice” of Richmond. This “kit of parts” would be used throughout the community in gateways, identity components and public/private corridor enhancement projects to tie the city’s image together.

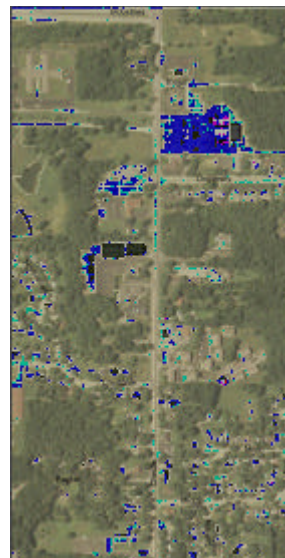
G 4. Establish Timeline for Completion of Gateway Elements

Referencing the City Image Master Plan, develop a list of priorities, projects and corporate partners to incorporate into an implementation schedule. Determine the most appropriate project champions to engage many into the process.

F. Corridors

Issues and Findings

Corridors of significance are those roadways, boulevards and arterials that serve as the connective spine for a community. Richmond’s two primary corridors are US 27 and US 40 as they bisect the city and provide the motorist continuous passage through the City. Secondary corridors include US 35 (Williamsburg Pike) and US 227. Because of the significant traffic counts on these roadways, businesses and institutions have located along these highways for ease of access to their facility by their customer or visitor base.



US 27 Corridor
Source: LSL

Corridors can play an important role in the personality of a city. They are elements of the urban fabric that are most often experienced by residents as they represent the more popular migration routes as people move about the city. They also are often times the first impression a visitor forms of Richmond. Consequently it is important for the city to consider the aesthetic as well as functional aspects of these roadways. Good and bad examples of this balance of the aesthetic and functional can be found in Richmond's corridors today. The City should determine which corridor sections represent the ultimate appearance they prefer and work with local and State transportation officials to implement those standards. The image conveyed from road design is strongly influenced by the sidewalks, streetscape enhancements, architecture of the buildings, landscape and signage.

Strategies and Recommendations

C 1. Perform a Physical Audit and Analysis of the Primary and Secondary Corridors

The City should perform a visual audit of the primary and secondary corridors to compare the image of these roadways and to assess the physical constraints and enhancement opportunities.

C 2. Explore Partnering Opportunities

Identify the key businesses and institutions located along the primary corridors and discuss the importance of physical image enhancements to the corridors. The enhancements should be tailored to each particular business or institution while complementary to the overall program.

C 3. Coordinate Corridor Enhancement Program with State of Indiana

The State of Indiana Department of Transportation is a critical partner in guiding the Corridor Enhancement Program. The State Department of Transportation improvements already approved coupled with future roadway improvements will have a significant impact on the appearance of the corridors. It is important that the City convey Richmond's desire to tailor the improvements to align with local interests through context sensitive design.

C 4. Adopt Design Overlay Districts

The City should work with stakeholders and interested parties to identify redevelopment opportunities along primary corridors that have significant impact on the image of Richmond. As an example the US 40 West area is a concern to the residents as voiced during the U-plan input sessions. This area should be considered for special overlay zoning to induce mixed use development appropriate in sale and market demand.

C 5. Adapt Smart Growth Sustainable Philosophy

The City in conjunction with others should develop a smart growth and sustainable philosophy to serve all aspects of corridor improvement, design and development. Sustainability was a major theme expressed throughout the comprehensive planning process and should be echoed throughout all aspects of community development including corridor development.

G. City Issues Maps

1. Existing Conditions & Opportunities
2. Historic Districts & Neighborhoods