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Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to present an economic development and revitalization plan for the Boulevard corridor in the city of Richmond. Study for this plan took place throughout the spring 2008 semester, and involved field assessments and analyses of the current state of the Boulevard and potential space available for development. The plan process also included consultation with city administrators, business owners who operate in the area now and developers who are establishing business there for future openings.

This plan conceptualizes the Boulevard corridor in a new urbanist form, where land is employed for compact, mixed and efficient use, and where land is made to fit what seem to be uses that would reap success and sustainability for the city of Richmond and its residents. It is divided into four main sections: the Introduction, which provides background and concept explanation on the project; Existing Conditions, which gives a snapshot of the current state of the plan area; the Plan, which includes the vision statement for how development in the plan area should unfold in the future, and supporting goals that outline steps necessary to reach that vision and Implementation Priorities, which ranks the strategies outlined in the plan and lists who should be responsible for those steps.

I thank the following people for their assistance and for the information their shared during the research and preparation phases of this plan: Jeannie Welliver, project development manager in the city’s Economic Development Department, for her invaluable advice and quick response; Ralph Higgins for his expert guidance, Dr. Morton Gulak for his support and creative allowances; Brooke Hardin, John W. Taylor and Tom Phan of the city’s Community Development Department, Ben Moss of Bow Tie Partners, representatives from the Richmond Braves team office, Rhoda Elliott of Bill’s Barbecue, representatives from the Department of Parks and Recreation; James Oliver, facilities manager for the Arthur Ashe Recreation Center; Sandra Jones of CBS 6 and Lieutenant Timothy Morley of the Richmond Police Department.
**Existing Conditions**

This section presents the existing conditions, site analysis and evaluation of the land use on the North Boulevard Corridor, as part of a small area economic development plan for the corridor. The plan area is bounded by Westwood Avenue to the north, Leigh Street to the South, Boulevard to the west and Hermitage Road to the east, in the city of Richmond, Virginia. The plan area, which spans 6.6 million square feet, is pictured in Map 1. This section provides information about the history, population, current land use, zoning, crime, circulation, building conditions and surrounding influences that pertain to this plan area.

**Map 1. Aerial view of the North Boulevard Plan Area**

Source: Google Earth
History

The Boulevard has had a long history as a business, sports and attraction center in Richmond. Starting from the early twentieth century, then-newly formed Virginia State Fair Association leased the land presently occupied by the Diamond to hold the annual State Fair of Virginia. The association erected a brick exhibition hall that housed novelty products and exhibits. This site hosted the state fair for several years.

Before the advent of the Diamond and the Richmond Braves, another major league baseball team saw its minor league extension team play in that space. In 1954, Parker Field (pictured in Figure 1) was erected in honor of Richmond physician Dr. William H. Parker, a local sports enthusiast. Parker Field became home to the New York Yankees’ farm team, the Virginians. Short-named “the Vees”, the team played its inaugural game against the likes of Yogi Berra and Mickey Mantle, with Casey Stengel sitting as the opposing bench manager. The Vees played for eleven seasons at Parker Field before moving to Toledo, Ohio. In 1966, the Richmond Braves moved in as the new Parker Field home team. The Braves played at the Parker Field facility until the 1980s, when the Diamond was erected.

The Boulevard’s sports theme spilled over to the local high school and university athletics scene, as many of the schools held Friday night football games and other sporting events in the area. These teams played in the Arena, which stood in the background to Parker Field. The Arena was the traditional site for not only these local matches, but also for trade and craft shows. The building was demolished in the 1990s.

The Lighthouse Restaurant, once located at 1224 N. Boulevard, was another popular staple of this corridor. The restaurant was a popular all-night eatery during the 1950s. It specialized in

Figure 1. Parker Field Stadium in 1965.

Figure 2. Lighthouse Restaurant in 1950.
hamburgers and ice cream, and was one of three chain locations in the city. Bill’s Barbecue also has a long tradition in the Boulevard area. Established in 1930, Bill’s specializes in Virginia-style barbecue, as well as pies, breakfast items and lemonades. Bill’s has two locations within the Boulevard area, and has had a long presence at both sites.
**Population**

The latest U.S. Census data shows that Richmond gained population in 2007, to reach 200,123 residents. Previous year’s data had Richmond containing 192,913 residents. The new figure means a 3.7 percent increase for the city’s population, which previously had been showing declines since 1990.

This new data report seems to tie in well with the results of Richmond’s September 2007 study of the downtown’s residential market potential, conducted by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc., a New Jersey-based market research and strategic analysis firm. In addition to analyzing housing potential, the data from the report give insight to the demographic groups that would likely be inclined to migrate to Richmond over the next five to 10 years. According to the data, 46 percent of households in Richmond are occupied by younger singles and couples; 36 percent by empty nesters and retirees and 18 percent by non-traditional families. Millennials, or people born between 1977 and 1996, and baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, in particular are projected to move into inner-city dwellings nationally well in to 2024. The commissioned study shows that Richmond has real potential to attract 16,050 households of the millennials, baby boomers and non-traditional family households in the next decade. That potential includes possibly capturing 48 percent younger couples and singles, 22 percent of empty nesters and retirees and 30 percent of traditional and non-traditional families.

Many of the millennials and baby boomer set already are acting on their projected inner-city migration. According to the city’s Downtown Housing and Population 2000-2006 report, downtown Richmond now boasts 6,005 residents in its downtown housing, up from 4,420 in 2000. That added population is consuming with new and existing apartments and condominiums as new developments sprout up regularly. Most of these residents fall in the millennial and baby boomer demographic groups.

Richmond’s slight increase in population and market potential for the future suggest that the city not only will have a sizeable demand to meet for varied housing options, but also for superior recreation and entertainment options. As it stands, the city remains a medium-sized market, with residents ranging in age from 25 to 44 years and 55 years and older constituting its largest age cohort brackets, as shown in Chart 1.

The city will see great demand among its retiree populace, which has a healthy appetite for culture, outdoor activity, arts and overall living. In his article “Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in Their 60s?”, Jeffrey Ziegler notes that baby boomers have changed the face of traditional retirement, with their devotion and commitment to exercise, fitness and activity. “Boomers will remain dedicated to health, wellness and exercise,” he writes. His list of things to remember about
the lifestyle and attitudes of baby boomers points out that “Boomers are known to work hard, play hard and spend hard; boomers view retirement as only a “mid-life” event and “their nostalgic mindset keeps boomers returning to the sites and sounds of their 1960s youth culture.” Richmond faces great potential and need in fulfilling the recreation, sports and entertainment demands of its youthful and boomer markets in the coming years.
Map 2 shows the current land use in and around the plan area. The yellow dotted line traces the corridors on which plan recommendations focus.

Map 2. Current Land Use Plan for the Boulevard and Surrounding Areas

The plan area contains a mix of light and heavy industrial, commercial and recreational uses. The Boulevard features a varietal landscape of two hotels, a city recreation and parks baseball field, three restaurants, two gas stations, an athletic facility, a national bus depot chain, a baseball stadium, a soccer field, and a municipal parking facility for city vehicles, as listed in Table 2. The parcels to the east of the Boulevard and along Hermitage Road house industrial businesses as well as loading docks for delivery tractor trailers and trucks.

Source: Richmond Department of Community Development Data 2004
With the plan area’s current land use, the mix of industrial and commercial operations, the businesses that operate there now do so exclusive of one another. There is no collective association that joins the businesses and uses as a particular district, despite the presence of regional recreational sites (Arthur Ashe Center, the Diamond) and some small and successful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boulevard Plan Area Businesses</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Inn</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen 64</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parker Field</td>
<td>Municipal baseball diamond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenandoah Shutters</td>
<td>Window framing company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Neil</td>
<td>Plumbing/hardware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill’s Barbecue</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-Haul</td>
<td>Moving and storage company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealease</td>
<td>Truck rental company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greyhound</td>
<td>Commercial bus/private transportation company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;E Reprographics</td>
<td>Large document production company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITGO and BP/Lucky</td>
<td>Gas Station and convenience store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Ashe Recreation Center</td>
<td>Indoor track and recreation center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Richmond Department of Public Works Maintenance Yard</td>
<td>Municipal vehicle maintenance facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Diamond</td>
<td>Baseball stadium; home of the Richmond Braves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesco Distribution</td>
<td>Distributor of electrical construction products and industrial supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulevard Square</td>
<td>Former warehouse currently being remodeled into a movieplex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Backers Stadium</td>
<td>Home stadium for VCU Soccer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kar World</td>
<td>Corner car lot and car wash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mowbray Paint</td>
<td>Paint company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
business enterprises (Kitchen 64, Bill’s Barbecue). This lack of cohesion presents an opportunity for development that capitalizes on the area’s gateway status and on the traffic that flows through the area and to the businesses there specifically.

The following sections provide analysis on select building footprints, parcels or corridors that stand out as potential development spaces within the plan area.

**Hermitage Road**

Hermitage Road is noteworthy for the mixed use functionality it seems to have taken on in the last several years. Historically, the blocks on Hermitage between Robin Hood Road and Leigh Street were solely devoted to industrial uses, with a series of warehouses operating there. Today, several of those former warehouse spaces feature commercial, institutional or residential uses. The Salvation Army operates a used goods retail store and donations drop off next door to the state’s Alcohol and Beverage Control headquarters and Greyhound Terminal offices. The SPCA recently opened doors on Hermitage, with its newly constructed intake center, which has gained quick popularity due to its spa-like facility for pets. Additionally, there are two new sets of loft-style rental apartment complexes on Hermitage Road at Leigh Street, which have introduced the residential element to the area. Todd Lofts apartment buildings (shown in Figure 3) and the Southern Stove Works Lofts and contain one- to three-bedroom units, ranging in 520 to 1,180 square feet and $850 to $1,500 in monthly rent, and mostly cater to professionals.

![Figure 3. Todd Loft Apartments at Hermitage Road and Leigh Street. This and several other loft-style apartment buildings have developed around the plan area in the last 5 years, providing a built-in market of potential customers for recreational and retail enterprise.](image)

**Alcohol and Beverage Control Headquarters**
Hermitage Road is home to the state Alcohol and Beverage Control headquarters. The Virginia Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control headquarters (Figure 4) spans 337,781 square feet on an 854,080 square foot parcel. The building and parcel sit directly behind the Diamond and Arthur Ashe, facing the parking lots to these facilities.

**City of Richmond Department of Public Works Maintenance Facility**

The city operates its maintenance yard for its fleet of service vehicles, including fire trucks, construction and street cleaning equipment and municipal cars, at this site. The facility is wedged between CSX’s railroad and the Sports Backer’s Stadium. Its parcel spans 614,569 square feet.

**Arthur Ashe Recreation Center**

The Arthur Ashe Recreation Center (Figure 5) is a 76,941 square foot facility. The parcel on which it is located spans 168,223 square feet. The Center remains the subject of possible closure and redevelopment, due to its deteriorating conditions and city interest in reusing the land. The Arthur Ashe was erected in 1981, in the name of the professional tennis great and Richmond’s native son. A number of city and regional athletes who went on to realize success at college and professional level sports competed at the Arthur Ashe, including former VCU athlete Kendrick Warren.

Today, the facility remains active, as the sole indoor track for regional teams, for school basketball games, cheerleading competitions and the school system’s emergency shelter, as well as an event space for anything from industry certification tests to city-administered job fairs. A February 2008 CBS news report revealed that having the Ashe Center saves the city an estimated
$127,000, by keeping the school system from having to rent event space at more costly outlets, like the Siegel Center.

**The Diamond**

The Diamond (Figure 6) measures 74,950 square feet, and its parcel is 386,809 square feet. The Diamond and Ashe Center share the parking lots located around and behind the two facilities, which is 425,218 square feet. The Richmond Metropolitan Authority owns and operates the adjoined lots.

The Diamond is the home field of the Atlanta Braves’ farm team, the Richmond Braves, until later this year after the team’s last game. In January, the Braves announced that they would relocate their team to Georgia. Richmond has not announced any plans to replace the team. Instead, the city has taken in approximately six proposals for possible redevelopment of the land on which the Diamond, the Arthur Ashe and Parker Field currently sit.

The Braves has catered to a diverse demographic in the time it has been in Richmond. Last year, 342,090 fans attended games at the 12,000 seat stadium. Table 3 outlines the income, age groups and other demographic qualities of fans that attended games at the stadium last season.

**Table 3. Diamond Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of attendees</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Fan Home Bases</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Percentage of Singles Who Attend Games</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 and under</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chesterfield</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Single, no children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>Henrico</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot; with 1 child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>&quot; with 2 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Hanover</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>&quot; with 3 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Other localities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Attendees between Ages 18 and 49

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Income Levels</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$25,000-$35,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$35,000-$50,000</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some post-graduate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$50,000-$75,000</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate degree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$75,000-$100,000</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade or other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$100,000+</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Richmond Braves

The Braves franchise has had overall healthy attendance at its games at the Diamond, despite its surrounding challenges. The industrial nature of the Boulevard area always has been an issue for the team, which made an unsuccessful bid about two years ago to relocate to the Shockoe Bottom neighborhood. The team wanted to relocate to an area that they saw as one that would provide a reason to “walk up” to their stadium, a location that would draw attendees from the State Capitol and central business district offices, as well as from the residences, restaurants and shops in and around downtown and the Bottom. After a period of controversial public debate in the media, the city rejected the idea of allowing the team to relocate to the Bottom, a move that never seem to settle between the two parties.

The team franchise see their current industrial surroundings as a mismatch to their sports and entertainment nature, as the lack of nearby restaurants, shopping or other pedestrian-oriented commercial amenities perpetuate pedestrian unease, and keep the area from feeling completely safe and functional for families and other fan patronage. Yet, despite those differences, the team has always enjoyed ample parking at the site, and a steady flow of game attendance.

### Parker Field

Parker Field is one of the city’s recreational baseball diamonds. The city’s department of parks and recreation handles reservations and upkeep of the site, which is used quite often throughout the year. Virginia Union uses Parker Field as its home field for its baseball team. According to administrators at the city’s Parks and Recreation department, Parker Field is popular among regional intramural leagues for their regular season games, and is reserved regularly from March through August each year. The field occupies 238,734 square feet.
**Idealease and U-Haul**

These two privately-owned companies occupy a combined 245,637 square feet in parcels. They are both part of national chains. Idealease, a full service transportation company, leases trucks, trailers and tractors to companies and individuals. U-Haul, a moving and storage company, rents trucks and maintains storage spaces, at this site. Both occupy space that is prime for its visibility and immediate access to the Boulevard. Their adjoined corner-anchoring location at Boulevard and Robin Hood Road has the ability to immediately pick up traffic from highway-exiting and entering vehicles.

**EconoLodge and New Generations Credit Union**

EconoLodge Motel and New Generations Credit Union sit just a few feet beyond an I-95/64 exit that passes a dead space under an overpass. EconoLodge sits on a 97,694 square foot parcel, while New Generations sits on an 115,763 square foot parcel. New Generations is adjacent to the parking lot for Parker Field. These parcels both have development potential to make the plan area into a commercial district, one with enclosing features that help define it as a unique place in the city.
**Zoning**

Map 3 shows the zoning designated for the plan area. The yellow dotted line traces the corridors on which the plan focuses. The area is zoned for M-1 light industrial and M-2 heavy industrial district uses. An M-1 zone can include parking decks and garages, shopping centers, hotels, motels and motor fuels dispensing outlets. An M-2 zoning district can include the same uses as listed above, in addition to any uses not permitted in any other district so long as those uses do not allow fish or seafood packing, refuse dumping or reducing, chemical manufacturing, flea
markets, public or private alternative incarceration or penal institutions; petroleum refining, storage or distribution; storage of dyes, explosive or pyrotechnics or outdoor shooting ranges, unless otherwise permitted by City Council.\footnote{http://www.richmondgov.com/Departments/communitydev/docs/Zoning_Ordinance_On-line.pdf}

Between Westwood Avenue and the interstate, the plan area includes a portion of land zoned for RO-3, or residential-office district. The Hermitage, a senior living facility, Holiday Inn, Kitchen 64, BP and Lucky Convenience Store are all located in this part of the plan area. The area’s current zoning is fit to allow for any commercial or recreational use this plan would recommend.
Boulevard is a main arterial roadway in Richmond. Virginia Department of Transportation’s 2006 Annual Average Daily Traffic Volume Estimates show that nearly 338,000 vehicles move on the Boulevard daily. The annual average daily traffic data is shown in Table 1 at the end of this paper.

Within the plan area, Boulevard intersects Westwood Avenue at the western boundary tip and Broad Street in the surrounding influences area. Leigh Street and Robin Hood Road are two other arterial roads that intersect Boulevard, enhancing its traffic flow. The roads and intersections that make up the plan area are shown in Maps 2 and 3.

**Gateways**

Boulevard’s containment and connection of two entry and exit ways to and from I-95 and I-64 interchanges make it a major gateway into Richmond. Add to that Boulevard’s feeder flow to the Museum district, Virginia Union University and Theological Seminary, the Diamond, the Arthur Ashe Athletic Center and Greyhound, and this road becomes a natural welcoming and departing path to visitors and residents alike. Figure 7 shows traffic coming from and heading towards the highway exit and entryways of the plan area.

The Boulevard’s built in transportation network helps meet the need of the area’s surrounding industrial land uses. Boulevard carries 44 percent of truck and bus type vehicles daily. The traffic count data is shown in Table 1 at the end of this report.

**Improvements and enhancements**

In the last 10 years, Richmond enhanced the Boulevard with bricked crosswalks at the intersections at Broad and Leigh Streets and added turn bays on Boulevard at Leigh Street.

Remaining major intersections on North Boulevard, including the one pictured in Figure 7, still feature the city’s traditional white-painted crosswalks, some of which are faded. The city also made a major change to the parking dynamic between Leigh and Broad Streets on the Boulevard—the city removed middle-of-the-street parking, and instead replaced it with grassy medians. This change has meant more parallel street parking for customers of the commercial corridor that exists between Leigh and Broad on the Boulevard.

**Pedestrian experience**
Boulevard’s wide span lends itself to fast flowing traffic from the highway entry and exit ways up to Broad Street. The intersections at Leigh Street and Robin Hood Road on North Boulevard, as well as the intersections at Robin Hood Road and Hermitage and Hermitage and Leigh, are equipped with pedestrian cross signals. However the heavy traffic volume, fast traffic flow and low-lying sidewalks make the area feel unsafe and unwelcoming for pedestrian traffic.

**Public transportation**

Map 4 shows the bus route stops for the plan area and the immediate surrounding blocks,

**Map 4.**  **Bus Routes and Stops in the Boulevard Plan Area**

![Map 4](image)

Source: Richmond Department of Community Development Data 2004

including Broad Street (Main and Montrose routes). The plan area contains a host of public
transit stops. The Greater Richmond Transit Authority operates services several bus routes along North Boulevard and Hermitage Road. The buses that stop in the plan area flow to all directions and various points throughout the city, including the West End and downtown. These routes and stops are strong assets for their ability to bring in would-be patrons and to reduce the need for automobile use for the plan’s proposed land use.
**Crime and Safety**

Two issues affect the feel of safety and security in the plan area: the presence of loiters and panhandlers and the fast traffic flow, due in large part to the lack of pedestrian safeguards. Loitering is a prevalent issue in the study area, particularly on the Boulevard around the Greyhound Bus Terminal and near the intersection of Broad and Boulevard. Homeless and transient individuals have a very visible presence in this area. Subjects in field interviews shared that the homeless use the area under the Boulevard overpass as a haven on a regular basis. In terms of other crimes, the plan area does not pose a major issue as compared to similar areas in the rest of the city, according to Lieutenant Timothy Morley of the Richmond Police Department’s Fourth Precinct, Sector 412, which patrols the plan area and surrounding blocks.

Crime data analysis for the plan is based on the statistics for the census tract in which the area falls, tract 402. In addition to the plan area, census tract 402 includes parts of Scott’s Addition and Newtowne West. This census tract had at least one crime incident in every category counted by the Richmond Police Department Crime Incident Information database. Those categories include homicide, sex offense, robbery, assault, burglary, vice, theft, vehicle theft and other classified crimes. Last year, Richmond’s Fourth Precinct responded to 1,546 criminal incidents in tract, up 30.2 percent from 2006’s total of 1,187. “Other” classified crimes and thefts made up the greatest number of incidents in both years. In 2007, there were 775 incidents classified as other to which police responded. That total represents a 45.7 percent increase from 2006, and 50 percent of the crime reported for 2007. There were 393 reports of theft in 2007, constituting 25.4 percent of incidents reported for 2007, 20.2 percent more than reported in 2006. Assaults rank third among the type of incidents reported in both year, with 124 incidents reported in 2007 and 127 incidents reported in 2006. This type of offense is the only one to have shown a decrease between the two years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Type</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>% of crime for 2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>% of crime for 2007</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Offense</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Theft</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1187</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1546</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.richmondgov.com/applications/crimeinfo/index.asp
Chart 2 shows the types of crimes reported for the plan area in 2006 and 2007. Crime in the plan area has the potential to diminish, says Lieutenant Morley, with the entry of the new Boulevard Square Movieplex and shopping outlets. Such new activity will add more pedestrian and automobile activity, and thus more eyes on the area, eliminating the isolation element, which enables the criminally minded. More pedestrian presence also could mean an increase in police activity, which may have to respond to altercations or attempted thefts. The inclusion of urban design elements and increased police presence and safety behavior on the part of business owners could play huge parts in making the area feel safe and operate safely.

**Emergency Preparedness**

Richmond is one of 14 Virginia localities designated as a “StormReady” community under the National Weather Service’s national program of the same name. Such a designation means that Richmond has a plan in place to communicate emergency warning alerts in the event of incoming dangerous weather, and has strategies prepared to shelter people in buildings that can withstand storm surge in the event of weather-related emergencies. The Arthur Ashe Recreation Center is designated as a StormReady evacuation and emergency shelter for Richmond and nearby jurisdictions in need. It also is used to house Richmond Public School students if and when students must be evacuated and transported away from their buildings. The Ashe Center was used for such an emergency even as recently as March 2008.
Surrounding Influences

The plan area has a host of surrounding influences that have the potential to have profoundly successful impact on new development. One of the most notable among existing influences is the commercial residential transformation taking place in Scott’s Addition. This primarily industrial swath has taken on a residential element that has brought in young urban professionals, both operating businesses and occupying loft condominiums and single-family attached houses, in these quiet blocks. It is not uncommon to see law offices, creative arts workshops and agencies, neighborhood cafes and nightlife entertainment outlets (Richard’s Gentlemen’s Club and Infusion Ice Bar) intertwined between the vacant and occupied manufacturing warehouses in Scott’s Addition. Buildings like Baker Atrium Lofts and Summit Lofts, two newly developed residential complexes in Scott’s Addition, and the new café and office activity are turning this once sleepy industrial nook along the CSX rail line into a powerhouse community (Baker Lofts and McKinnon and Harris Inc. Furniture pictured in figures 8 and 9). This turnaround could mean great traffic and demand for the right type of future development on the Boulevard.

Another notable influence will be the development and opening of Boulevard Square, an entertainment complex that will feature a movie theater, retail space for shops and restaurants and connectivity to the Science Museum of Virginia and the Diamond. Bowtie Partners, a New York-based development company, is in the process of renovating the former locomotive assembly plant (figure 10) that sits at Boulevard and Leigh Street, to prepare the site for its grand opening in early 2009. The company sites the nearby reach of surrounding communities to their new location, coupled with Boulevard’s connectivity to the
interstate, as strong points that will make this project popular among city and regional residents and guests.

Greyhound has recently announced that the company will begin renovating its facility with some new upgrades. It is unclear whether the company will make improvements to the exterior, but any such changes could help enhance the visual appeal and quality of the Boulevard and future development in the plan area.
| Summary of Existing Conditions: Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities of Plan Area |

**Strengths**

- Immediate access to major state and national interstates—I-95 and I-64 in both directions
- Centrally located—directly off of Broad Street, less than ten minutes from downtown Richmond, footsteps away from area museums and surrounding neighborhoods
- Area already served by public transit
- Established historical commercial and sports attraction persona
- Ample parking space
- Already zoned for commercial uses
- Nearby to many new and established popular restaurants, cafes and entertainment hubs (River City Tattoo, Richard’s Rendezvous, Kitchen 64, Moore Street Café)
- Road, water, sewer and traffic infrastructure already in place

**Weaknesses**

- Heavy homeless presence—loitering and panhandling prevalent
- Intense industrial presence
- Fast-moving and frequent traffic, current land use not conducive to pedestrian access or consumer activity
- Buildings look worn and out-of-date—no real urban design or theme at play
- No connectivity to rest of Boulevard

**Opportunities**

- Strong potential for regional development partnerships given high accessibility of the area
- Surrounding neighborhoods, high average daily traffic counts, proximity to interstate entry and exit ways, DMV, Science Museum and Children’s Museum provide established potential consumer market
- Potential attraction area connectivity between plan area and rest of Boulevard, museum district, Science and Children’s Museums
- Large lots/parcels provide spacious potential development sites
- Planned opening of Boulevard Square will add retail uses, attract customers

**Threats**

- Homeless presence, loitering and panhandling could grow and impede on safety feeling in the area
- Current infrastructure, land uses, sense of undeveloped emptiness could keep consumers and pedestrians away
- Heavy and fast-moving traffic poses a danger to pedestrians and accident risks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route Label</th>
<th>Route Alias</th>
<th>Start Label</th>
<th>End Label</th>
<th>Link Length</th>
<th>Annual Average Daily Traffic</th>
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<td>I-95 SB, I-64 EB</td>
<td>I-95; I-195</td>
<td>SR 161 Boulevard</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>73,000</td>
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<td>SR 161 Boulevard</td>
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<td>I-95 SB, I-64 EB</td>
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<td>I-95 East Interchange</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>VA 161 Boulevard</td>
<td>US 33; US 250 Broad St</td>
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<td>I-95</td>
<td>NCL Richmond</td>
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<td>VA 161 Boulevard</td>
<td>SR 147 Cary St</td>
<td>US 33; US 250 Broad St</td>
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<td>127-7603 Hermitage Rd</td>
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<td>VA 161 Hermitage Rd</td>
<td>Westwood Ave</td>
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<td>Route</td>
<td>From</td>
<td>To</td>
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<td>Length (mi)</td>
<td>Traffic Volume (veh/day)</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>127-7603</td>
<td>Hermitage Rd</td>
<td>Robin Hood Rd</td>
<td>Ramps from I-95</td>
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<td>7,700</td>
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<td>127-7568</td>
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<td>Saunders Ave</td>
<td>Hermitage Rd</td>
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<td>7,100</td>
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<td>127-7586</td>
<td>Brookland Pkwy</td>
<td>Hermitage Rd</td>
<td>Brook Rd</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>6,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>127-7603</td>
<td>Hermitage Rd</td>
<td>Ramps from I-95</td>
<td>Brookland Pkwy</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>4,200</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation
The Plan

Vision

The Boulevard Corridor will be a major welcoming and departing gateway to and from Richmond, one that contributes to the drawing power of the city. Through a sports and entertainment-focused theme, the Boulevard corridor will help to clearly define and modernize the city of Richmond’s persona, as a place not only with rich American historical significance, but also as a key present and future recreational destination, and the next standout attraction stop along interstates 95 and 64 between the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area and the Hampton Roads region.

The Boulevard corridor between Westwood Avenue and Broad Street will be known as the Boulevard District, where colorful gateway flags located on either sides of the Boulevard will guide visitors to the multi-use sports stadium, visitor’s center, city sports museum, gift shops and restaurants, parking decks, municipal sports and learning facility, Boulevard Square Shopping Center and the public plaza that will be located within its borders. Pedestrian-oriented street enhancements and landscaping will connect both sides of the Boulevard, to make for one entertainment district for all to enjoy. A special attraction-focused public transit bus and route will carry passengers from the Boulevard to the Science Museum, Children’s Museum, the Museum District, Carytown, Byrd Park and downtown, in order to extend the Boulevard’s connectivity to surrounding attractions.

The land use, circulation, district character and urban design guideline sections that follow and their supporting tables, figures, strategies and implementation tracks are all instrumental in reaching the vision stated above.
The Plan

Proposed Land Use

New in-migration, political changes and economic well-being are remaking the faces of life in the city of Richmond throughout the Richmond region. City and regional living are being reformed to meet the needs and desires of a more educated, professionally-focused populace, one that appreciates life and culture and often puts those elements at a premium above career pursuits. Richmond city and region are attracting young professionals, families and new retirees at a noticeable rate, so much so that the market is responding feverishly with condominium, townhouse and new enterprise development to take advantage of new opportunity.

In that same vein, city residents have made the choice to elect its mayoral leadership, have been vocal about getting new, more meaningful use out of their central business district (through the downtown master planning input process) and seek more creative and relevant recreational and entertainment outlets. Currently, the Department of Parks and Recreation has taken up study of its stock of recreation centers, parks and pool facilities and, as a response to its findings, has begun making plans to increase its offerings to catch up to projected future population demand in the city and established national standards. These plans include development of three new multigenerational recreation facilities (ones suitable for tots and seniors) at 30,000 square feet a piece, 554 acres of new parks, two outdoor pools and more, for an estimated cost of $171 million.

All of these factors seem to indicate that Richmonders are raising their expectations, and are prime for cultural and entertainment amenities that satisfy their choice palate. City officials should take heed of this forward-moving change and build up the Boulevard into a sports and entertainment attraction district. Map 5, on the next page, shows the proposed land use plan for the Boulevard corridor.

### Potential benefits of sports and entertainment district

*Developing the Boulevard corridor into a sports and entertainment district could mean great benefits the city and the region, including:*

- A chance for successful regional interaction and cooperation (both in developing the site and in event attendance, with guests coming from throughout the region)
- *Increased pride and morale*
- Potential new jobs (ex. service industry employment)
- Added growth in city (potential driver for increase residual development nearby to new district)
Map 5. Proposed Land Use in the Boulevard Plan Area

Source: Richmond Department of Community Development Data 2004
Table 3 provides a detailed breakdown of the space requirements for the proposed land uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Use</th>
<th>Recommended space (in square feet)</th>
<th>Proposed capacity*</th>
<th>Parking requirement**</th>
<th>Recommended site</th>
<th>Space availability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minor league baseball and soccer stadium</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>8,000 seats</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>Combination of parcels currently occupied by Arthur Ashe and the Diamond</td>
<td>Combined parcels=555,032 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilevel parking deck, street-level storefront space, at Boulevard and Ellen Road</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>Five levels of parking, street-level institutional space totaling up to 75,000 square feet</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Combined parcels currently occupied by Uhaul and Idealease</td>
<td>Combined parcels=321,406 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal sports facility</td>
<td>98,500</td>
<td>200 people</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Combined parcels currently occupied by New Generations Credit Union and Econolodge</td>
<td>Combined parcels=213,457 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial office building</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Site of VA ABC headquarters</td>
<td>854,080 square foot parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilevel parking deck on current DPW Maintenance Yard</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>Five levels of parking</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>Site of DPW Maintenance Yard</td>
<td>614,569 square foot parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public plaza</td>
<td>77,516</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Share parcel with corner-anchoring stadium; plaza to wrap stadium in a curved angle around its façade, on Boulevard</td>
<td>155,032 square feet remain from stadium parcel space calculation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Diamond currently seats 12,000; Braves corporate office recommends 8,000 for filling effect in a new stadium

Estimate used for maximum capacity at the proposed municipal facility
Parking figures are based on estimates and calculations

For stadium use, calculation based on assumption that stadium parking should allow for one space to every 10 spectators; special surface lot and on-street spaces would be made available for special needs and private parking.

For municipal sports facility, assuming one space to every five visitors.

Table 4 provides a breakdown of current sport uses on the Boulevard and their measurements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sports Backers Stadium (home to kickers)</th>
<th>Arthur Ashe Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Braves stadium</td>
<td>12,000 seating capacity (averaged approximately 5,000 attendees per game in 2007)</td>
<td>3250 seating capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Diamond parcel:</td>
<td>Kickers parcel: 326,877</td>
<td>Center parcel: 168,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>386,809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With its optimal interstate accessibility, wide, spacious layout, and existing infrastructure, the Boulevard stands out as an opportunity laying in wait for development to shape it into a successful venture for the city and a potential source of pride and uplift for city residents. In a newly developed Boulevard district, city residents can find a persona for its often-dogged town, a place where residents could point to and say, “Our leaders got it right,” and “This is a draw that we own.” Sports entertainment holds its power in being able to bring together the most unlikely groups of people, breaking down demographic barriers and generating pride and happiness, all of which are needed in Richmond. An even greater incentive for the city is the potential revenue, job and population growth (attraction factor) this type of development endeavor could generate in the long-run.

**Goal 1:** A Boulevard and Robin Hood Road-anchoring, multiuse sports stadium (see figure 11) that is home to capital city minor league baseball and soccer, as well as collegial and high school athletics programs and major entertainment events, and that is available for use throughout

![Figure 11. Exterior view of Robert F. Kennedy Stadium, Washington DC, an example of a successful multiuse stadium. RFK simultaneously served as the home field to the Washington Nationals and D.C. United teams.](image-url)
the year; stadium parking is supported by an adjoining multilevel parking deck and surrounding surface parking lot.

**Strategy 1.1:** Acquire parcels on which the Diamond sits and merge parcel with parcel on which the Arthur Ashe and rear surface parking lot sit to prepare for development.

**Implementation:** The Economic Development Department should acquire parcels and oversee preparation of parcels for new use.

**Timeline:** 0-1 year

**Strategy 1.2:** Create a 400,000 square foot, 8,000 seat stadium on the parcels currently occupied by the Arthur Ashe Center and the Diamond (example in figure 11). Surface-lot parking currently located behind the Arthur Ashe will remain, but will be redrawn to fit the new stadium.

**Implementation:** The Economic Development Department and the Mayor’s Office should collaborate to attract a minor league baseball team and get the Richmond Kickers to buy in on the new stadium use concept. The Economic Development Department and the Mayor’s Office also should work together to broker a cost and revenue sharing deal with a new team, regional municipalities and state government.

**Timeline:** 0-1 year

**Strategy 1.3:** Create an attractive, multilevel parking deck on the parcel currently occupied by the Department of Public Works. Connect the deck to the Boulevard with stairwell that extends up to sidewalk at overpass on either sides of parking deck (see figures 12 and 13).

**Implementation:** The Economic Development Department should commission a private developer to construct the parking facility and connecting stairwells.

**Timeline:** 0-1 years
Strategy 1.4: Create a combination brick and concrete public plaza around the stadium front, one that faces the Boulevard and features in-ground landscape lighting, sitting benches and green shrubbery.

Implementation: The Economic Development Department should commission a private developer to construct the plaza. Upon completion, the Department of Parks and Recreation should assume maintenance and upkeep of the space.
Timeline: 0-1 years

Goal 2: A 98,500 square foot municipal sports facility that features an indoor pool, aerobic training floor, indoor track and meeting rooms and would be located on the parcel currently occupied by EconoLodge. The municipal facility would be joined to the parcel directly across Robin Hood Road (currently occupied by New Generations Credit Union) by a surface parking lot. The parking lot would connect to the Parker Field baseball diamond (see figure 14).

Strategy 2.1: Close off Hermitage Road between the I-64/I-95 exit and Robin Hood Road.

Implementation: The Department of Public Works should work with the Virginia Department of Transportation to reroute traffic that exits here to the existing Boulevard exit.
Timeline: 2-3 years

Strategy 2.2: Acquire and join parcels currently occupied by New Generations Credit Union and Econolodge.

Implementation: The Economic Development Department should acquire these parcels.
Timeline: 2-3 years

Strategy 2.3: Construct municipal sports facility.
Implementation: Economic Development should partner with the Department of Parks and Recreation to find and commission an appropriate private developer to construct the
new municipal sports facility. The Department of Parks and Recreation should take over management and maintenance of the facility upon its completion.

Timeline: 2-3 years

Goal 3: A Boulevard and Ellen Road corner-anchoring multilevel parking deck that includes on its street level a visitor’s center, police substation and sports gallery.

Strategy 3.1: Acquire and join parcels currently occupied by Idealease and U-Haul.

Implementation: The Economic Development Department should acquire these parcels and relocate the businesses within the city. The department also should commission a private developer to construct the parking deck in similar fashion to VCU West Broad Street Deck.

Timeline: 1-2 years

Strategy 3.2: Establish visitor’s center and police substation.

Implementation: The Economic Development department, working under the full support and backing of the Mayor’s Office, should commission the Richmond Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau to set up a visitor’s center at this new location. The center will provide information on the Boulevard District attractions as well as other attractions available around the city and on the attraction-themed bus that would circulate around the Boulevard corridor. The visitor’s center would be the beginning and ending point for the attraction bus.

The Mayor’s Office should direct the Fourth District Police Precinct to establish a substation in the newly established visitor’s center, from which day and night patrol officers for the Boulevard area would operate.

Timeline: 1-2 years

Strategy 3.3: Establish a sports gallery that is dedicated to celebrating sports in Richmond, particularly star athletes born in the region, notable national athletes that played in the region and sports-related events that are annual traditions in the region (ex. Ukrops Marathon).

Implementation: The Mayor’s Office should commission the city historian and the Valentine History Museum administrators to collect exhibit materials and to set up a largely photographic gallery within the newly established visitor’s center. The Mayor should appoint a director to the gallery.

Timeline: 1-2 years

Goal 4: A commercial office building that serves as the corporate offices for capital city minor league baseball and soccer teams that occupy the multiuse stadium, and as a leased office space for other business entities. The corporate office building would be constructed on the parcel
currentl
occupied by the Virginia Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control, on Hermitage Road.

**Strategy 4.1:** Acquire ABC headquarters and parcel from state government.

**Implementation:** The Mayor’s Office and the Economic Development Department should negotiate purchase of this parcel.

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Strategy 4.2:** Construct commercial office building.

**Implementation:** The Economic Development Department should commission a private developer to construct the commercial building. The department should seek and accept input from the team administrators for the type of space and facilities they would need to operate in the building.

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Strategy 4.3:** Lease space in commercial building to professional and service industry tenants.

**Implementation:** The Economic Development Department should hire a private real estate firm to manage the commercial building and to lease space in the building.

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Proposed Circulation**

To further efforts to make Richmond a “City of the Future,” city leaders not only must increase their appreciation of the value of the city’s attractions and amenities, but also must be smart and efficient about promoting our city’s assets, to increase pride and morale among current residents, and appeal and excitement among potential residents and visitors. As competition mounts between cities and counties in the region and throughout the U.S. to attract revenue and population, one option to elevate Richmond is to bundle its urban entertainment, cultural and retail attractions, and promote the city as an urban playground for residents and visitors of all ages.

In that vein, the plan area would serve as a focal point destination on an attraction-themed public transit route. The circulator route comes from the successful example seen in Washington, DC

![DC circulator bus](image)

**Figure 15.** DC circulator bus, an example of the type of circulator bus proposed here.
(see figure 15), where a specially-designed public transit bus circulates between the National Mall, Union Station, downtown, Georgetown and the new convention center. The concept is that a public transit bus solely devoted to transporting tourists between attractions will

- save tourists time
- ensure that the attraction centers, and their surrounding shopping and dining outlets, capture an optimal amount of guests
- provide greater travel efficiency and
- make the District’s offerings standout among its regional tourism competitors.

Here, the bus would circulate from the visitor’s center on the Boulevard corridor to the Science and Children’s Museums, the museum district on the Boulevard, Carytown, Byrd Park, downtown and Shockoe Bottom. Given the presence of a new surface parking lot and the reopening of Main Street Train Station, Shockoe Bottom could serve as a parking and entertainment destination for tourists en route to the Boulevard corridor.

**Goal 5**: A dedicated, visitor’s-themed bus that routes between the Boulevard corridor and attraction points in the city, for greater connectivity and to highlight Richmond’s urban amenities.

**Strategy 5.1**: Establish a Richmond connector bus, dedicated to traveling only between the Boulevard corridor to the Science and Children’s Museums, the museum district on the Boulevard, Carytown, Byrd Park, downtown and Shockoe Bottom.

**Implementation**: The Economic Development Department should partner with Greater Richmond Transit Company and the Richmond Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau to create a connector bus and its route.

**Timeline**: 2-3 years

Another circulation issue that will play a major role in the success of the Boulevard corridor will be easy accessibility to the Boulevard corridor and proposed parking facilities. Map 6, on the next page, shows the proposed circulation for the plan area. Traffic circulation patterns will remain the same for the most part, except at the interstate 64/95 exit onto Hermitage Road, where traffic should be redirected to the Brookland Park Boulevard and Boulevard exits. With the current infrastructure, vehicular traffic would be able to access the two proposed parking decks from four arterial road entry points.
Map 6. Proposed Circulation in the Boulevard Plan Area

Legend
- Bus Route
- Railroads
- Blocks

Gateway points
Multilevel parking decks
Arterial road connections to parking deck
Proposed stadium point
Proposed commercial office
Proposed municipal recreation facility
Goal 6: A district that has constant pedestrian and traffic flow, to make for hourly activity and an enhanced sense of safety and accessibility.

Strategy 6.1: Incorporate street amenities, including street and landscape lighting; a yield sign-laden, brick cross path that extends the length of the Boulevard overpass and connects across Boulevard to both sides of the overpass (see figure 16); directional signage and sitting benches, to add to pedestrian ease.

Implementation: The Department of Public Works should install street amenities, brick cross path and should maintain streetscape upkeep, in accordance with urban design guidelines.
Timeline: 1-2 years

Strategy 6.2: Widen median strips on Boulevard between Leigh Street and Robin Hood Road, and add brick cross paths on Boulevard at the intersections at Boulevard West, Robin Hood Road, Westwood Avenue, and on Hermitage Road at Robin Hood Road, Sherwood Avenue and Cummings Drive.

Implementation: The Department of Public Works should reconstruct the median strips and install and maintain the brick cross paths.
Timeline: 1-2 years

Strategy 6.3: Allow for easy, quick and safe access to parking decks.

Implementation: The Department of Public Works should install city-standard signage to help facilitate easier vehicular flow to parking facilities and their entryways.

Timeline: 0-1 year

District character

When visiting Shockoe Bottom, Carytown or Jackson Ward, there is very much a sense of entering a particular space, a space with certain significance and an expected set of amenities and hub points. The buildings and streetscapes of each place work in concert to let drivers and pedestrians know immediately where they are entering. The businesses, building forms and features are signatures of these areas.

The Boulevard plan area needs and has the potential for this same sort of district status, in order to establish the area as a destination and to elevate it on its way to success. The plan area is wide
enough and contains enough commercial significance, thanks to its highway access points, traditional industrial presence as well as its tenure as home to the Richmond Braves, to carry district status if built up with proper support.

**Goal 7:** A revitalized Boulevard corridor re-imagined as a unique district that is pedestrian-friendly and welcoming to individuals and families.

**Strategy 7.1:** Enhance sidewalks on Boulevard with streetlights and street banners according to urban design guidelines.

**Implementation:** The city’s Department of Public Works should install antique street lights on Boulevard, similar to those used in Shockoe Bottom, with attached “Boulevard” banners, as outlined in the urban design guidelines.

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Strategy 7.2:** Increase police patrol presence to treat loitering and panhandling issues

**Implementation:** The Fourth District Police Precinct should operate a police substation out the proposed Visitor’s Center, where day and night shift patrolmen would patrol the plan area.

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Strategy 7.3:** Add gateway signage on Boulevard at the I-95/I-64 entry and exit ramp and on the median at Broad Street and North Boulevard, and attraction icons to highway signs on I-95/I-64.

**Implementation:** The Department of Public Works should install and maintain signage at the indicated points, and should consult the Virginia Department of Transportation about adding attraction icons to interstate signs.

**Timeline:** 1-2 years

**Goal 8:** An entertainment district that blends cooperatively and functionally with existing industrial and commercial uses, including small business, making the Boulevard district a trendy attraction center.

**Strategy 8.1:** Preserve some of the existing industrial presence on arterial roads off of Boulevard and on Hermitage Road, specifically in places not identified as potential development sites.

**Implementation:** Representatives from the city’s Departments of Economic Development and Community Development should work together to acquire property on parcels designated as potential development sites and to transition industrial entities located on potential development sites to other M-1/M-2 zoned areas. The Economic
Development Department should solicit private developers for potential retail and office design and construction.  
**Timeline:** 2-3 years

*Strategy 8.2:* Form the Boulevard Merchants Association (BMA), a business association between owners of businesses on the Boulevard, Hermitage Road, and the arterial roads immediately off of the Boulevard, which would facilitate the plan area feeling and operating like a unique district.

**Implementation:** The Economic Development Department should hold initial meetings to bring group of owners together and to get the Association up and running. After the group’s fifth meeting, the department should leave the BMA to operate on its own.  
**Timeline:** 2-3 years

**Goal 9:** A district that is aesthetically pleasing and features sustainable, modern design quality

*Strategy 9.1:* Implement urban design guidelines for new and existing structures in the Boulevard District.

**Implementation:** City Council should adopt recommended urban design guidelines. Upon adoption, the BMA should become responsible for monitoring businesses in the plan area to ensure adherence to urban design guidelines  
**Timeline:** 1-2 years
Urban Design Guidelines

Despite new uses entering the Boulevard corridor area, those new uses are remaining steadfast with the area’s traditional industrial roots. The best example of this revitalized usage can be seen in construction of the Boulevard Square, which maintains the frame of the former warehouse that was located at the Square’s new site for the structure’s exterior, and builds a new, modern interior to fit the development concept. Such usage, and the remaining industrial presence, adds a quirky, ultra-modern appeal to the Boulevard, an appeal that can accelerate the Boulevard District to must-check-out status. To keep that unique character going, the Boulevard District should be maintained according to the following guidelines:

Buildings that front Boulevard should feature brick or solid colors or neutral, sandy tones, and storefront windows. Aside from the stadium and parking decks, buildings should be to human scale, no more than three stories tall.

All buildings, except for the proposed municipal sports facility, should come to the sidewalk and should not have parking lots in front.

Trash receptacles should match the green metal trash bins used throughout the city and the central business district.

Sitting benches also should match those used throughout the city.

Figure 17. The windows, scale and neutral tones of the Charlottesville Transit Station show an example of the recommended building design and form structures for the Boulevard District.

Figure 18. Photo of trash receptacles used in City of Richmond.

Figure 19. Richmond features green benches throughout the city.
Street lamps should match those used on Main Street in Shockoe Bottom, and should feature Boulevard-themed banners that match those used in downtown Richmond.

Figure 20. Example of streetlamp adorned with banner signage.
## Implementation

The chart below provides a summary overview of implementation priorities outlined in the plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Immediate (0-1 year)</th>
<th>Intermediate (1-2 years)</th>
<th>Long-Term (2-3 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Land Use</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Acquire parcels on which the Diamond sits and merge parcel with parcel on which the Arthur Ashe and rear surface parking lot sit to prepare for development.</td>
<td>City of Richmond Department of Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Create a 400,000 square foot, 8,000 seat stadium</td>
<td>Department of Economic Development, in partnership with the Mayor's Office</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>Create an attractive, multilevel parking deck on the parcel currently occupied by the Department of Public Works. Connect the deck to the Boulevard with stairwell that extends up to sidewalk at overpass on either sides of parking deck</td>
<td>Department of Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Create a combination brick and concrete public plaza around the stadium front, one that faces the Boulevard</td>
<td>Department of Economic Development, in partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>Close off Hermitage Road between the I-64/I-95 exit and Robin Hood Road.</td>
<td>Department of Public Works and the Virginia Department of Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Acquire and join parcels currently occupied by New Generations Credit Union and Econolodge</td>
<td>Department of Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Construct municipal sports facility</td>
<td>Departments of Economic Development and Parks and Recreation</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Responsible Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Acquire and join parcels currently occupied by Idealease and U-Haul</td>
<td>Department of Economic Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mayor's Office, Department of Economic Development, Richmond Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Fourth District Police Precinct</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish visitor’s center and police substation</td>
<td>Mayor's Office, Department of Economic Development, Richmond Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Fourth District Police Precinct</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establish a sports gallery that is dedicated to celebrating sports in Richmond, particularly star athletes born in the region, notable national athletes that played in the region and sports-related events that are annual traditions in the region</td>
<td>Mayor's Office, City Historian, administrators from the Valentine History Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Acquire ABC headquarters and parcel from state government</td>
<td>Mayor's Office and the Department of Economic Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Construct commercial office building</td>
<td>Department of Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lease space in commercial building to professional and service industry tenants</td>
<td>Department of Economic Development</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Circulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Establish a Richmond connector bus, dedicated to traveling only between the Boulevard corridor to the Science and Children’s Museums, the museum district on the Boulevard, Carytown, Byrd Park, downtown and Shockoe Bottom</td>
<td>Department of Economic Development, Greater Richmond Transit Company, Richmond Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Incorporate street amenities, including street and landscape lighting; a yield sign-laden, brick cross path that extends the length of the Boulevard overpass and connects across Boulevard to both sides of the overpass; directional signage and sitting benches, to add to pedestrian ease</td>
<td>Department of Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Widen median strips on Boulevard between Leigh Street and Robin Hood Road, and add brick cross paths on Boulevard at the intersections at Boulevard West, Robin Hood Road, Westwood Avenue, and on Hermitage Road at Robin Hood Road, Sherwood Avenue and Cummings Drive.</td>
<td>Department of Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Allow for easy, quick and safe access to parking decks</td>
<td>Department of Public Works</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### District Character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Enhance sidewalks on Boulevard with streetlights and street banners according to urban design guidelines</td>
<td>Department of Public Works</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Increase police patrol presence to treat loitering and panhandling issues</td>
<td>Richmond Police Department, Fourth District Precinct</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Add gateway signage on Boulevard at the I-95/I-64 entry and exit ramp and on the median at Broad Street and North Boulevard, and attraction icons to highway signs on I-95/I-64</td>
<td>Department of Public Works and the Virginia Department of Transportation</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Preserve some of the existing industrial presence on arterial roads off of Boulevard and on Hermitage Road, specifically in places not identified as potential development sites</td>
<td>Departments of Economic Development and Community Development</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8.2 | Form the Boulevard Merchants Association (BMA), a business association between owners of businesses on the Boulevard, Hermitage Road, and the arterial roads immediately off of the Boulevard, which would facilitate the plan area feeling and operating like a unique district | Department of Economic Development, Boulevard area business owners | *
| 9.1 | Implement urban design guidelines for new and existing structures in the Boulevard District | City Council | * |
References


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