

Candidates for Mayor -- Responses to PSG Questionnaire	
PLANNING PROCESS	
<b><i>What will you do to improve planning and zoning in the City of Richmond, including involving the public in planning?</i></b>	
Jon Baliles	As the only candidate for Mayor to have experience as a staff member in City Hall (in this century) and specifically as Assistant to the Director of Planning and Development for three and 1/2 years, the first thing the next mayor needs to do is remove political influences on the Planning Director. Political decisions are not and should not be the guiding force in zoning and planning decisions. As a council member, major developments in my district have required vigorous community outreach by the developer. The result has been community input and guidance in developer plans before these have been considered by the Planning Commission or Council. That approach will be expanded to the entire city for major projects if I am elected Mayor.
Jack Berry	Good planning takes time up front, but can provide a big pay-off to both residents, developers, and city officials. Residents get to see alternatives in advance, without the time pressures associated with a voting deadline. Residents are afforded the opportunity for meaningful input and get clarity about what kinds of projects or policies will be supported and which ones will not. At the same time developers get to avoid or minimize the greatest deal killer, uncertainty. The success of the public input process for the Downtown Plan and Riverfront Plan has taught us that public buy-in is critically important and achievable, if we are willing to invest in the process. As mayor I will push for a comprehensive update of the City's Master Plan and the creation of sub area plans that focus on neighborhoods, especially those that are facing development pressures.
Bobby Junes	Seems as if many of planning and zoning regulations are outdated. Chance / time to upgrade the City Master Plan realizing that the planning as well as zoning components all go together. That is the City's side. However, part two of the equation involves citizens input, reflection, positive / negative comment, and participation in process. Planning Commission to give citizens more equal share(not just to listen to citizen comments) regarding the approval or dismissal of proposed projects.
Joe Morrissey	Because there's almost no citizen involvement now we have the opportunity to be as creative as we possibly can. We're even going to work with people at Amazon to find out how did they get the best input from their clients, and how do we make sure we include citizens in decision-making that impacts their lives.
Michelle Mosby	My administration will assess the current practices for all departments, including the planning department, to determine where there are strengths and weaknesses in order to build upon what is working and improve on the delivery of our services where needed. Planning must include a meaningful public process where individuals have an opportunity to engage and provide input in order to shape their community. Conducting public meetings with neighborhoods and civic associations actively involved would help in obtaining input throughout the update of our Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan must provide a framework for the growth and development of our City and our zoning must reflect policies that will support vibrant and livable communities while maintaining the character of the City. We must not shy away from increasing density to encourage mixed use development in areas that will be supported by public transportation.
Levar Stoney	I believe it starts with collaboration and community engagement. I applaud the Richmond Transit Network Plan for their efforts to intimately involve members of the community in the design process for the new transit network, whether through regular community meetings in all corners of the city, or through the easy-to-navigate web surveys. As Mayor, I will be hands-on in these discussions, so that when Council make their decision, I can head back out into the community and involve residents in the development and implementation process, too. RTNP are setting a gold standard for how we should engage Richmonders in decisions that impact their day-to-day lives. An immediate goal of my administration will be finding talented leads for Community Development, Economic Development, Planning, & Development Review. We need to make it easier to grow our tax base so we can continue to invest in public schools. We also need to be doing a better job of bringing government to the people. That's why I have committed to holding quarterly office hours in all nine districts. Any improvement or zoning process needs to be a transparent and collaborative one.
Bruce Tyler	To improve the planning and zoning, the first step is to update the master plan. The city of Richmond has not had a comprehensive master plan update since 2000, and an update is long overdue. A properly developed master plan with public input via public meetings will be a valuable planning tool that will allow for responsible growth.
Lawrence Williams	Increased Williams Blue Ribbon Citizens Advisory Boards

<b><i>What will be your approach to potential economic development deals which don't conform to current city plans/zoning or where the city doesn't have an updated sector plan?</i></b>	
Jon Baliles	My approach will begin with community involvement. Any economic development deal will require the process I mentioned above. If plans don't conform to current plans then that will require even more community input to see if special use permits are warranted or if the development is compatible with the neighborhood. I will not try to use political pressure to garner five votes on Council in order to force deals on the public. Those days are over. The city has begun the process of updating the master plan and the next Mayor needs to support staff, ensure that public participation is part of the process (using the Downtown Master Plan process as an example) and that planning director/staff has the tools they need to make sure the plan is implemented.
Jack Berry	The pace of economic development deals is going to accelerate because RVA is becoming one of the most attractive cities in America. If we are able to clearly articulate our desires for the scope and character of development, we will be better able to maximize the potential that economic development offers. Projects are going to come our way, and it is incumbent on the City to be prepared to articulate community expectations for design and quality. At the same time, developers should be able to expect clear guidance and a reasonable path to a decision, whether it is yes, no, or yes with conditions. Delay should not be a tactic. If a project does not conform to adopted plans, then a clear message should be sent to revise the plans or withdraw the plans. If the developer seeks an amendment to the plans, then s/he should expect to engage in a robust community engagement process, with a clear path to an answer in a reasonable time frame. In every case of unsolicited proposals, the City Council and citizens should be fully informed at clearly defined points in the process. Initial staff reviews should be shared with the public and a process for gathering input and considering alternatives should be defined. Transparency is critical to building trust in the development process. And the key to success is a strong and respected team in the Planning Department that assures fairness and openness and timely decision-making.
Bobby Junes	On the front end realize that the current operating procedure(s) are out of date. One size shoe not to fit for all projects. Until Master Plan / zoning ordinances are up-graded to realize that the current Special Use permit is where all the negotiations (implicit as well explicit) between the city, general public, and owner to take place. The open discussion whereby the give and take for approved plans, citizen's active engagement, and securing unnamed sector items (neighborhood, local, regional, state, federal) related to a projects macro / micro perspective. Especially in areas that are targeted for economic development or where sector planning implications are still in the preliminary stages of adaptation.
Joe Morrissey	I will start by recognizing that the highest return on investment in our city is in education not economic development. It would be impossible for me to even consider an economic development proposal that fails to comply with our zoning requirements nor to our master plan.
Michelle Mosby	The City of Richmond has been and will continue to be very attractive to prospective businesses. We would strive to work with prospective businesses in order to locate them in an appropriate area within our City. In order to do that, the City must take a proactive approach to economic development by targeting the markets that we can best serve. The Richmond Marine Terminal (RMT) is a prime example of an economic engine for our City and the region, where a deliberate economic development strategy will be required to attract the industry that will flourish and support the RMT, create jobs, and broaden the City's tax base. We will work with our partners at the state and federal level to make strategic investments in our transportation infrastructure and develop our workforce in a manner where our citizens can benefit from the jobs and the industry can have a stable workforce.
Levar Stoney	The current approach to zoning is inefficient. My campaign is headquartered in Scott's Addition, a part of the city that reflects where the city is going, as a home to great local brew restaurants, local businesses and the ever-growing innovation community. Currently, most of the neighborhood is zoned for M-1 industrial. By spot zoning, the City ignores the potential in Scott's Addition for harmonious economic development that encourages a diversity of uses and users (mixed income housing, retail, commercial). The arduous process of applying for an SUP to make any changes hinders growth in the city, and makes it harder to expand our tax base. As Mayor, I will ensure that the development community as well as local residents and business owners are brought to the table for discussions about zoning and edits to the Master Plan. And once we have a plan in place, I will work hard to ensure it is executed efficiently, with City Hall helping as opposed to hindering the process.
Bruce Tyler	Until we have a comprehensive master plan that has been approved by City Council, we should not enter into any economic deals that do not conform to zoning. It is not in the best interests of the city and its citizens to change the rules simply to accommodate a single business deal.
Lawrence Williams	Increased Williams Blue Ribbon Citizens Advisory Boards

<b><i>Will you direct and fund upgrades to the city website that make planning information and ongoing initiatives easier to find and track?</i></b>	
Jon Baliles	Yes. The entire city web site needs to be upgraded in so many areas. A complete overhaul is warranted and would be beneficial for all citizens.
Jack Berry	In this era of technology, ready access to information by the public is expected and required. There are many cities that have perfected the process for open access to documents, plans, proposals, analyses, etc. and RVA should join the ranks of cities that are setting the standard for transparency. It can be as simple as a drop-box site or a central repository on the City website. Access to information is essential to building trust and buy-in. There are no excuses when it comes to access to information. The staff time and cost is minimal, particularly when compared to the public benefit.
Bobby Junes	I'm open to initiatives which can make the current system easier to use, to share relevant information, to assist owner / applicant / citizen / resident / city employee. To be cost conscious of these in-house I.T. (information technology) upgrades on the front end realizing that they may be implemented on an incremental basis.
Joe Morrissey	Absolutely. Our city website has become so user unfriendly that no one finds it of any help at all in their planning or their initiatives.
Michelle Mosby	Yes. The City must invest in our communication with the public, including updating our website in a manner that citizens can easily track projects and locate information in a logical manner.
Levar Stoney	Absolutely. I have said from the beginning of this campaign that I will be a hands-on, visible, transparent Mayor. I will be a Mayor that embraces and encourages innovation. One of the key problems we have at City Hall is that there are individuals still using Atari's in an X-Box world. We need to catch up with other city governments that are using GIS mapping and open data to tackle their challenges. Part of that is incorporating a user-friendly online component of City Government, which will also help encourage transparency and accountability. We can't expect to be successful if we keep running government the same way it was run 20 years ago.
Bruce Tyler	The current city website is very cumbersome to navigate. It is not user friendly and often requires one to make multiple choices while looking for the zoning ordinance or master plan. I will have the website reworked so that users can easily access the zoning ordinances, the zoning maps, and associated documents. It is critical to have this information available to our citizens in a user-friendly format.
Lawrence Williams	Yes.
<b>LAND USE AND TRANSIT</b>	
<b><i>Do you support mixed-use transit oriented development within walking distance of the BRT?</i></b>	
Jon Baliles	Yes, the city is currently working with the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission to create a transit-Oriented Development (TOD) plan for the BRT corridor. When it is complete, this will be a key strategy in this area to promote development and be a priority and be incorporated as an element of the next Master Plan.
Jack Berry	Mixed-use transit oriented development is the wave of the future, and there are many current examples from successful cities to draw upon. BRT presents a new opportunity to serve corridors and destinations that have the potential for new development. Economic development along the corridor should be strongly encouraged as it can enable RVA to accommodate inevitable growth without an over-reliance on traditional auto-dominated development patterns that focus on parking at the expense of transit. BRT will open up new opportunities for transit oriented development and the City should plan accordingly and maximize that opportunity.
Bobby Junes	I'm open to the concept of mix-use transit-oriented development within a red zone boundary walking distance to BRT. Looking to enhance development that aids in the revitalization of community area. Let proposed owner or developer make their point. We will consider the proposal pending its size, type of project, linkage to surrounding existing and/or future developments.
Joe Morrissey	Absolutely! I also anticipate the use of bike-sharing programs that have worked so successfully across the country and around the world. We need transit feeder lines to help people make it to new BRT lines from neighborhoods which do not have any form of mass transit now.
Michelle Mosby	Yes, absolutely. The City has made an investment in the BRT to improve the travel options and quality of life for our citizens. Mixed-use development that is served by transit and supported by a connected bike and pedestrian network is fundamental to the growth of the City.
Levar Stoney	Yes, we need to be doing all that we can to connect people to jobs. We also need to be supporting projects that use public transit stops as hubs of economic development.
Bruce Tyler	Yes, the only way that the BRT will be successful will be to encourage denser development along the main route and within walking distance of the BRT.
Lawrence Williams	Yes.

<b><i>How will you ensure that the BRT investment enhances economic and social equity?</i></b>	
Jon Baliles	There is an ongoing comprehensive analysis to make the GRTC network better by serving more neighborhoods and job corridors within the city. The BRT will be a spine of a broader, more effective and more reliable network. We can use that transformation to then push for better access to jobs in the counties and build a more regional network in the future. In order for the BRT to enhance social equity, it is imperative that GRTC's routes feed in to the BRT in a meaningful way.
Jack Berry	It is critically important that BRT benefit socially and economically diverse communities. BRT cannot favor choice riders, or be seen as an express route, at the expense of the transit dependent population. There is a perception that BRT will divert resources away from the traditional riders of GRTC, and I will ensure that does not happen. BRT has the potential to serve as a spine, a series of linear transfer points that reduce the need for every route to connect at a destination downtown. BRT can be a connector with multiple feeder routes that improve equitable access and convenience while reducing trip times. BRT will not be successful unless it is part of a web of transit routes that benefit residents in every part of the city.
Bobby Junes	By taking a systematic approach. Consider the long-term components on front end of BRT. Essentially, we're all in this as a team; economically, environmentally, and socially. If we desire livable and viable communities, we must undertake a all-inclusive approach to sustainability that includes social equity. It is critical to expand our understanding about how governments articulate the connection between equity and other dimensions of social sustainability. One obvious point at hand is the realization that a large minority of the city's population (18 years & older) do not have access to or own automobiles for personal transportation.
Joe Morrissey	By prioritizing underserved and poverty-stricken neighborhoods with all of the initial investments in this area. We will exclusively direct funds to these underserved areas.
Michelle Mosby	We will build on the land use planning that is currently underway to support the BRT and encourage development in a manner that will fully utilize the rapid transit service. We will establish affordable housing policies that will facilitate mixed income to stabilize the housing market in a manner where the cost of housing will not outpace the current median income and housing costs.
Levar Stoney	We need to focus on accessibility and affordability. This includes considering the diversity of the user, especially our students and senior citizen populations. I am a strong supporter of neighborhood feeder routes. It's time we expand to having a Route One Corridor, an expanded 250 Corridor, and a 360 Corridor. There are roughly 100,000 jobs that are inaccessible by public transit in the Richmond area. We have far too many people not connected to opportunities for social and economic mobility, but the BRT is just the first step in addressing our transportation needs. I applaud the work being done to design and implement the Richmond Transit Network Plan (RTNP) and believe it is critical that we acknowledge that BRT is the beginning of a wider, regional transit network in Central Virginia. As Mayor, I would also want to explore discounted or free transit for our senior citizens, making travel easier for those living on a fixed income.
Bruce Tyler	Allowing more building density along the route and within walking distance is the key to the success of the BRT. The denser the development, the more likely the system will be successful in enhancing economic and social equity in our city.
Lawrence Williams	Increased Williams Blue Ribbon Citizens Advisory Boards

<b>PARKING</b>	
<b><i>Will you support a study of the parking inventory and an evaluation of progressive parking policies and zoning to promote use of transit, walking and bicycling, and to encourage redevelopment of parking lots and placement of parking underground?</i></b>	
Jon Baliles	The city has prepared a parking inventory. What is needed now is action to expand this inventory into a broader plan that incorporates a balance of autos, transit, cycling, and pedestrians. This plan should include development decisions, zoning changes, and smart growth. Structured parking and underground parking can be incorporated into development on current surface lots (like the one the city owns behind the Renaissance building on Broad that could serve the BRT corridor) and in future development.
Jack Berry	I will support an evaluation of the city's parking inventory and its parking policies. The City should look at smarter pricing models and better management of available parking to facilitate turnover. Surface parking lots are an interim use downtown and should be redeveloped at the first opportunity. Parking decks and lots kill the streetscape and create dead zones between more vibrant areas. Underground parking should be encouraged and active pedestrian-oriented uses at street level should be the expectation.
Bobby Junes	Open to the study of a parking inventory as well as evaluation of advanced parking policies and zoning to encourage utilization of transit, walking and bicycling, and to foster redevelopment of parking lots and the consideration of underground parking facilities. Double play as you can increase the city revenues from real estate taxable base as well enhance physical environment whereby people can interact with one another. We have to remember that the City's prior parking lot studies were done incorrectly and eventually tied up approximately \$70 million dollars' worth of the City's bonding capacity. I would like to do more research (read the prior reports, talk to people involved in the project) as to what went wrong in the past before making any new future commitments.
Joe Morrissey	Yes.
Michelle Mosby	Yes. The City must develop a parking master plan that will support the parking demands of today. The master plan should provide a current inventory of parking and the utilization for all times of the day. The master plan would provide recommendations for parking policies that will support a multimodal approach to transportation options.
Levar Stoney	Yes, we need to be more creative in our approach to addressing parking concerns. Once the study is complete, we need to set a goal of implementing the recommendations within a reasonable timeframe. Richmonders are tired of discussions not leading to action.
Bruce Tyler	While several studies have been conducted concerning the current parking inventory, we should build upon this information and look for ways to promote alternate transportation uses. As for encouraging the use of parking lots for redevelopment, I am confident the market forces will prevail in minimizing surface parking in the downtown area. As our city becomes denser, we will see a combination of underground decks and above ground decks with retail activities on the first floor. The current Downtown Master Plan encourages this approach for development in the CBD.
Lawrence Williams	Yes.
<b><i>Will you support reduced parking requirements within walking distance of high frequency transit?</i></b>	
Jon Baliles	See answer above. I will also support adapting the modal structure of BRT transit oriented development in nodes near BRT stations along the route in order to encourage alternate modes of transit.
Jack Berry	Parking requirements should be re-examined in transit rich corridors and dense urban areas if we are going to truly encourage public transit. Richmond has the minimum parking requirements while other pro-transit cities have maximums. We should consider reduced parking requirements where high frequency transit is available.
Bobby Junes	Open to the proposal for reduced parking requirements within walking range of high-frequency transit. Would like to see the results of how other cities have contended with same or similar type parking issue and high-frequency transit.
Joe Morrissey	I'm still studying this matter. Citizen input would be appreciated.
Michelle Mosby	Yes. Parking is largely a function of supply and demand. The demand for parking decreases as the supply of reliable transit as a viable option increases. Therefore, we must seek the equilibrium of parking and transit service in order to support our economic development and independence of the automobile.
Levar Stoney	We need to take a balanced and pragmatic approach. We have to be aware that small businesses could be negatively impacted by reduced parking requirements. We can offset this in part by encouraging citizens to use public transit, reducing the amount of parking spaces needed. As Mayor, I will be a champion for 21st century public transportation and work with the community and small business owners to find the best solution possible in each neighborhood.
Bruce Tyler	Yes, we should be able to reduce the parking requirements with walking distance of the BRT. With more residents wanting to live in the urban environment, car ownership will decline and alternate forms of transportation will emerge.
Lawrence Williams	Yes.

<b>ARCHAEOLOGY</b>	
<b><i>Will you support an archaeology ordinance and commission?</i></b>	
Jon Baliles	A friend and former staffer in the Planning department that would have been in charge of this proposal put forth by Councilwoman Robertson was not in favor of such a commission and I tend to agree with my former colleague. I think it would be more beneficial to appoint someone in Planning (or hire a city architect and city historian) that can accomplish the goals of the commission without the interminable slowdowns and petty politics that can dominate in too many instances. I support growth and infill development while protecting our historic treasures, but we must do so in a way that is manageable and not subject to paralysis by analysis.
Jack Berry	I would support a policy that focuses on protecting significant sites and mitigating development impacts of important historical resources. Such a policy would define criteria for significant sites and ensure that appropriate studies are conducted, findings are documented and artifacts are safeguarded.
Bobby Junes	I would like to put the ball in motion. Richmond has a long as well as rich historical background. How have other cities or towns with outstanding historical backgrounds (Jamestown, Williamsburg, Yorktown, Washington D.C.) dealt with the same issue. Certainly – a number of our historical sites (state capital, slave trail, canal walk, civil war facilities) should be placed in a preservation zone. Similar to the way select properties are awarded Historical designation – we should designate preservation zones.
Joe Morrissey	Absolutely!
Michelle Mosby	The City of Richmond is one of the most historic places in the Country. We must preserve our history by establishing measures that will require due diligence of archaeological research and best practices in excavation in areas where artifacts are likely to be found. We will work with historic preservation to develop policies that will be effective in protecting historic artifacts without be cost prohibitive.
Levar Stoney	Richmond has a rich history, I believe we need to protect and preserve it. However, an ordinance would need to be implemented in a balanced way that does not serve as a barrier to pragmatic and smart growth.
Bruce Tyler	At this point, I do not support an archaeology ordinance. Instead, I believe a commission should be established to study the impact of passing such an ordinance. I believe citizen and property owner input is necessary before supporting an ordinance that would require archaeological exploration.
Lawrence Williams	Yes.
<b>TREES</b>	
<b><i>Will you support an update to the tree ordinance, require a citywide inventory of trees on public property, a strong tree commission, and the funding necessary to preserve and expand the tree canopy?</i></b>	
Jon Baliles	The tree ordinance needs revisions, to be certain. The city already has prepared a tree inventory in conjunction with VCU. The mayor put forth a laudable goal to plant 10,000 trees, but then cut the Urban Forestry staff and did not supplement the budget in order for them to be able to maintain the trees we have, much less the additional inventory. As a former landscaper, that will be a priority for me. I do not think the Urban Forestry Commission should be revived as it existed when it met on a monthly basis. I served as secretary of that Commission for nearly two years and while the tree policy they developed serves as a good guide, the paralysis by analysis analogy again is apropos. More thought and effort and resources should be put into a professional Urban Forestry staff with appropriate resources to manage our tree inventory and canopy.
Jack Berry	Richmond's trees are a defining asset of our city. Richmond deserve a high-performing city organization that has the expertise, capability and resources to protect and replace the city's tree canopy and an oversight body that informs policy choices and holds the city accountable for tree preservation. An updated ordinance is an essential element of the City's commitment to its tree canopy.
Bobby Junes	Open to support a upgraded tree ordinance. Have seen and have been impressed by the efforts of local neighborhood and civic associations as they volunteer time to aid / replenish trees in our park system. Perhaps a dual system whereby we supply the materials, as well as trees, and the local groups do the planting.
Joe Morrissey	Absolutely! I've been studying Falls Church as a model jurisdiction in this area.
Michelle Mosby	Environmental stewardship is key to providing our citizens with a quality of life and appreciation for biodiversity. We will examine the existing tree ordinance and provide cost effective recommendations for maximizing the tree canopy.
Levar Stoney	I am open to updating all outdated ordinances. I have called for a complete performance review and audit of City Government within my first 100 days in office. I have also committed to collaborating with outside partners. Any plan needs to be developed in partnership with the local community, and in collaboration with organizations like Partnership for Smarter Growth.
Bruce Tyler	We are very lucky to have the number of trees on public property in our city. They are an asset in reducing pollution and air temperatures in our city. Studies have been conducted to have an understanding of our tree inventory on public property. What is needed here is more funding for an additional arborists, maintenance of trees, and planting of trees.
Lawrence Williams	Yes.