

MAY 2014



SHOCKOE BOTTOM COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PLAN

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

L. DOUGLAS WILDER SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS: URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

SHOCKOE BOTTOM COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PLAN

MAY 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The plan before you is both experimental and implementable. In the course of the spring semester at Virginia Commonwealth University in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Master of Urban and Regional Planning students enrolled in URSP 691: Historic Preservation Application drafted the plan under the direction of Dr. Bryan Green. Initially, this plan was purely historic preservation. Soon the class realized that there was more at stake than the loss of buildings; that community and identity, integral to the built environment, were greatly endangered.

Harnessing a nebulous idea that planners and urbanists hold so inherently within them that they have yet to name it, the Shockoe Bottom Community Conservation Plan is an alternative strategy for Richmond's oldest neighborhood.

With development possibilities and pressures returning to the region, it is paramount that Shockoe Bottom take hold of the reigns of progress and direct it to a consensus-reached ideal: to enliven "The Bottom" without changing what makes it so beloved among this city of neighborhoods.

Within this document are several recommendations that, under the concept of Community Conservation, direct Shockoe Bottom toward a prosperous future by enhancing, not destroying, its personality. The plan is intended to be read front to back: feel free, however, to skip to the section that entices you the most.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to

SHOCKOE BOTTOM

SPEED
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VISION STATEMENT

The Shockoe Bottom Community Conservation Plan is intended to encourage responsible development within the framework of historic preservation to create a cohesive and vibrant community with a focus on historic resources, placemaking, and economic development.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

Engaged residents and stakeholders guide the future of their community through prudent management and vision, ensuring that development and growth is consistent with the unique social, cultural, and economic context of the neighborhood.

Community Conservation is not exactly preservation and it is certainly not urban renewal. It's contextual growth. Community Conservation seeks to protect a community through the protection of the built environment and existing resources. This is a new preservation rooted in traditional concepts of neighborhood identity combined with public participation.

“CITIES HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF PROVIDING SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY, ONLY BECAUSE, AND ONLY WHEN, THEY ARE CREATED BY EVERYBODY”

-JANE JACOBS, ACTIVIST

METHODOLOGY

In order to make clear and effective recommendations, the USRP 691: Historic Preservation Applications class studied various topics relevant to the Shockoe Bottom community and its future conservation. Research was completed by all students.

The initial phase of the class consisted of an investigation into the history of the area, recent planning and development practices, preservation plan techniques, and site walks of the neighborhood. Guest speakers provided practical knowledge to enhance the students' academic understanding of topics including memorization, survey techniques, and cohesive planning.

After this initial phase, the students discussed their own visions for the future of Shockoe Bottom. Through much deliberation, the class established three major concentrations: historic resources, economic development, and placemaking. Dividing the concentrations into subsections, the students familiarized themselves with a topic of their own and formulated potential recommendations. The students presented and discussed their recommendations to each other, finally deciding on essential recommendations for the community.

Apart from the concentrations and their recommendations, certain students researched Shockoe Bottom's history, applicable master plans, and current land use and zoning. These elements formed a context for the Shockoe Bottom Community Conservation Plan and acted as guidelines for recommendations.

The history section was lead by Rachel Tippett and the concentrations were lead by Emily DeHoog, Susanna Parmelee, and Nicholas Quint. Primary compilation and design were completed by Josh Mallow. Maps were created by Chelsea Hartman.

CONCENTRATIONS

The Shockoe Bottom Community Conservation Plan has three major concentrations: Historic Resources, Economic Development, and Placemaking, each with three contributing factors. This plan seeks to define these nine factors and give the necessary recommendations to conserve the unique Shockoe Bottom community and its neighborhood.

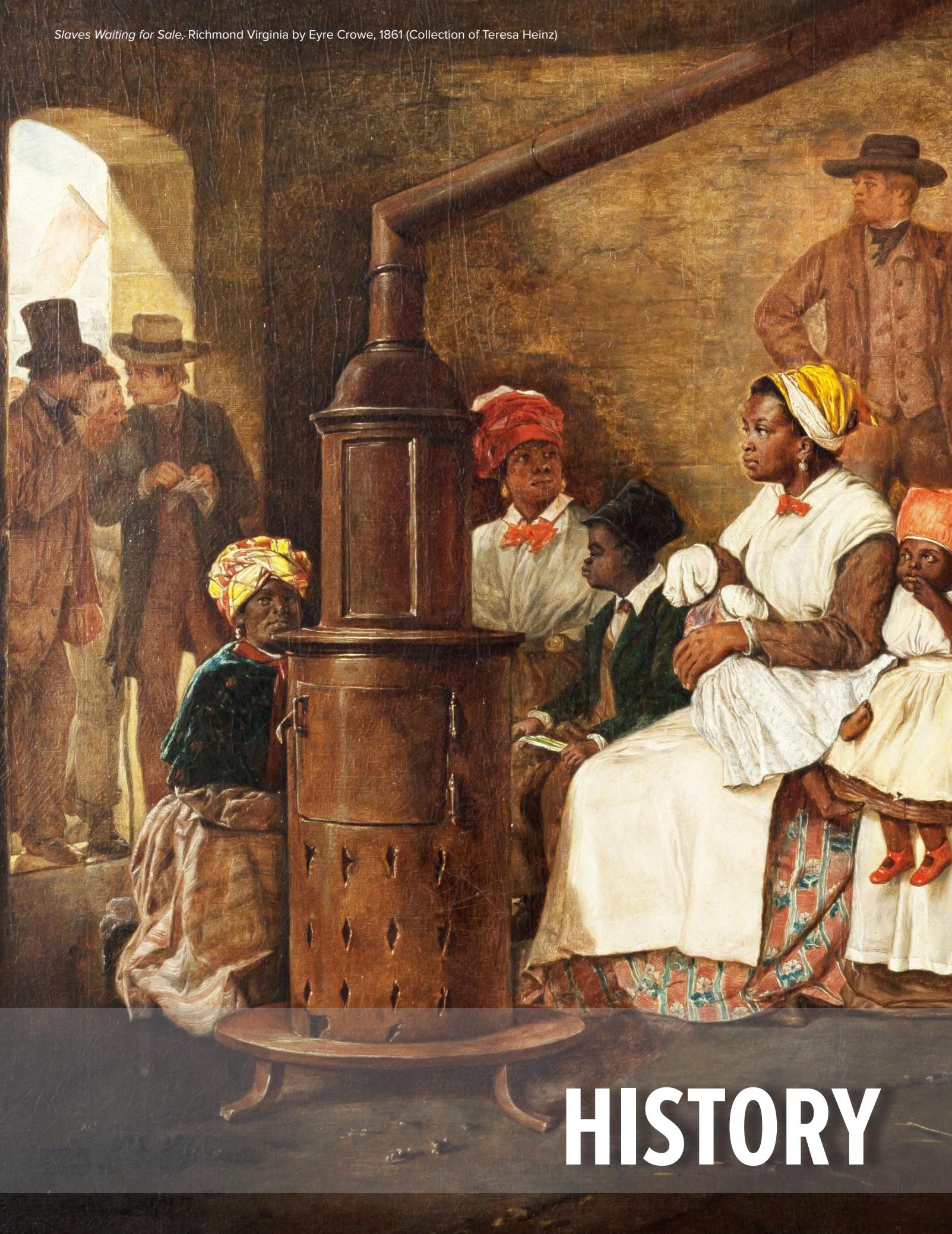
THE PLAN

Community Conservation holds that the future is a product of the past, and for that reason this plan will begin with a detailed history of Shockoe Bottom, starting from William Byrd II's founding to the present day. With the historical context established, the plan will manifest the modern urban planning context through current zoning of the area. With context in place, the plan will delve into the three concentrations and their recommendations. Throughout this document, the reader will find floating quotes. These are used to illustrate great ideas in community conservation from top planners, star architects, renowned historians, and urbanist citizens.

“WHAT PRESERVATION IS REALLY ALL ABOUT IS THE RETENTION AND ACTIVE RELATIONSHIP OF THE BUILDINGS OF THE PAST TO THE COMMUNITY’S FUNCTIONING PRESENT.”

-ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE,
ARCHITECTURE CRITIC

Slaves Waiting for Sale, Richmond Virginia by Eyre Crowe, 1861 (Collection of Teresa Heinz)



HISTORY

18TH CENTURY: FOUNDING

Nestled on the fall line of the James River, Richmond was established by William Byrd II in 1737. Shockoe Bottom is Richmond's earliest industrial and political center, and greatly aided Virginia in becoming an influential power. This small town was laid out on a grid pattern and maintained a modest population of several hundred people. In the decades preceding the Revolutionary War, Richmond remained self-serving. When the state capital was moved from Williamsburg to Richmond in 1780, Shockoe Bottom began to develop into an industrial and interstate trading center. The growth of these industries defined and shaped the area for most of the 19th century.

In the five years following the transfer of the state capital to Richmond, the total population and geographic size of the city increased exponentially. Prior to 1780, development had not expanded west of Shockoe Creek. Its volatile nature caused the course to change multiple times before the creek was channelized underground in the 1920s. One of the first significant developments during Shockoe Bottom's early period was the construction of the first marketplace. The site, which still hosts a market today, initially housed a simple woodshed. A single story masonry building replaced it in 1794. Sixty years later, a second floor was added and used as

Richmond's first governmental and civic meeting hall. The marketplace was utilized as a social and political gathering point, making it a central hub for the Shockoe area.

19TH CENTURY: INDUSTRY AND SLAVERY

Industry

During the first half of the 19th century, Shockoe Bottom underwent a boom in commercialization and industrialization during which time Richmond developed from a small town into a major industrial power. Up to this point, most buildings were frame and highly susceptible to fires which ravaged Richmond. Worst of all was the Richmond Theatre Fire, which claimed the lives of seventy people, one-tenth of Richmond's population, in 1811.¹ This tragedy was memorialized by Monumental Church, which still stands over the site and mass grave of the fire. Even though the Theatre building was of masonry construction, the severity of the fire pushed citizens to rebuild more consciously in terms of materials.² This revitalization and reconstruction from frame-based to masonry gave birth to the rise of factories along the banks of the James River.

The key to Shockoe Bottom's suc-

¹ Jeremy Slayton, "Theatre Fire 200 Years Ago Claimed 72 Lives," Richmond Times Dispatch, December 26, 2011.

² Mary Wingfield Scott, Old Richmond Neighborhoods (Richmond: Whittlet and Shepperson) 1950, 68.

cess in industrial production was its prime location along the fall line of the James River. The fast moving waters encouraged the use of hydropower and made milling possible. Virginia's two main cash crops in the 19th century included tobacco and wheat.³ Surrounding counties produced the crops and transported them to Richmond for processing.⁴ Richmond mills produced massive quantities of flour which were then stored in warehouses throughout Shockoe Bottom. Production of these crops made Richmond a manufacturing power in the 19th century.

Slave Labor

Urban slavery in Shockoe Bottom grew out of the need to recruit more workers into factories during this boom. Slave labor allowed factory owners to expand the scale of production while also constructing more factories and warehouses.⁵ Slaves accounted for almost three-quarters of the workforce as most of them were "leased out" by their rural owners who no longer could make full use of their services.⁶ The appeal of a predominantly-slave workforce began to push out paid whites as prices of tobacco began to stabilize.⁷ Soon slaves were a dominant portion of the Richmond's antebellum popula-

³ Midori Takagi, Rearing Wolves to Our Own Destruction: Slavery in Richmond, Virginia, 1782-1865 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999) 21-22.

⁴ Ibid, 11.

⁵ Scott, Old Richmond Neighborhoods, 82.

⁶ Takagari, Rearing Wolves, 23.

⁷ Ibid, 33.

tion, reaching 7,500 by 1840.⁸ The rise in slave population gave way to a totally new social dynamic and industry which went beyond tobacco production.

As slaves poured into Shockoe Bottom from surrounding rural counties, factory owners were confronted with a unique situation. Slave laborers in these factories could not all sleep under the watchful eye of their temporary master. Each night, slaves were given an allowance for food and boarding. However, social segregation forced slaves into some of Shockoe Bottom's most undesirable areas.⁹ Notorious conditions, such as those at Adams Mill Valley where industrial and plumbing waste were freely dumped, were indicative of the nightly sleeping situations of Richmond slaves.¹⁰ However, these segregated areas allowed slaves to form broader social connections separate from the white community, eventually culminating in the formation of the First African Baptist Church. This burgeoning society created uneasy feelings and fears among white citizens.¹¹ This fear was physically represented in a series of legal codes aimed at preserving "Christian morals," which ultimately quelled any slave behavior that demonstrated a level of individual freedoms.

Shockoe Bottom Slave Traders

While Richmond's industrial prow-

ess gave the city widespread notoriety, the city's role in slave trading would garner it more far more attention. With location serving as the most fundamental element, Shockoe Bottom easily transported slaves along the James River. An estimated 350,000 slaves were sold out of Richmond between 1820 and 1860 to dealers throughout the South.¹² During the 19th century, Richmond was second only to New Orleans in slave trading; a fact which was contingent on the mass labor required in cotton cultivation.¹³ In 1778 the Virginia General Assembly outlawed the importation of slaves. This was followed by the Federal Government's passing of the African Slave Trade Act of 1808, which criminalized importation of slaves into the US.¹⁴ These two pieces of legislation promoted the interstate slave trade, allowing Virginia to serve as a slave exporting state after the collapse of the tobacco agricultural industry.

The importance of slavery to the success of Richmond cannot be understood without the context of the immense role the slave trade had in Shockoe Bottom. Slaves were brought to Richmond, held in holding cells called slave jails, and sold to slaveholders from all over the Eastern seaboard. These

slave jails were located in the area along Shockoe Creek. The most infamous was Lumpkin's Jail, which was situated just west of Shockoe Creek. The book *Anthony Burns: A History* details the dreadful conditions slaves were kept in at Lumpkin's Jail. As a result, the jail now represents the human experience hundreds of thousands of slaves endured during their time in Richmond.

Slave trading was a fundamental component of Virginia's economic well-being. Once it ceased to exist, the industries of Shockoe Bottom were forced to reevaluate themselves.

20TH CENTURY AND 21ST CENTURY: REDEVELOPMENT

With the transition into the 20th century, Shockoe Bottom never experienced the same economic level of success that occurred during its antebellum period. After the Civil War, Shockoe Bottom was forced to rebuild upon what little structural elements remained, attempting to retain its historical value. As the 20th century progressed, preservation and redevelopment of Shockoe Bottom helped to reinstate the area as a place of importance in Richmond. During the 1990's, Richmond completed its first modern floodwall to help curb flooding in Shockoe Bottom: an issue which plagued the city since its founding. Unfortunately the floodwall had the

⁸ Ibid, 19.

⁹ Ibid, 39.

¹⁰ Ibid, 40

¹¹ Ibid, 60.

¹² Maurie D Micinnis, "Mapping the Slave Trade in Richmond and New Orleans," *Buildings and Landscapes* 2 (2013), 6.

¹³ Takagari, *Rearing Wolves*, 77-79.

¹⁴ The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, "The Abolition of the Slave Trade, The New York Public Library, <http://abolition.nypl.org/home/> (accessed April 14, 2014).

opposite effect during Hurricane Gaston; preventing the heavy rainfall from draining out into the river. Since Gaston in 2004, Shockoe Bottom has put forth an effort to improve upon its existing flood prevention infrastructure through improved draining capabilities. Today, Shockoe Bottom retains the same mixed-use neighborhood infrastructure but with far less industrial presence. The area, once again, is set to undergo an undetermined transformation which hopefully will accentuate and preserve its historic nature.



FLOODING IN SHOCKOE BOTTOM LEAD TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FLOODWALL IN THE 1990s.
HERE IS SHOCKOE BOTTOM DURING HURRICANE AGNES IN 1972

STUDY AREA

AREA BOUNDARIES

Bound to the north by Marshall Street with the inclusion of the African Burial Ground, to the east by 21st Street, the south by Main Street with the inclusion of the parking lot in front of Main Street Station, and to the west by I-95. Maps of the study area can be found on pages 18 and 19. While more of Shockoe Bottom can be found south of Main Street, the class chose these boundaries to match scope and time constraints placed on them. This area comprises nearly all of Shockoe Bottom and is at the greatest risk of community destruction.

ZONING

Zoning information and data was gathered from the City of Richmond's 2000-2010 Master Plan. The study area is primarily zoned M-1: Light Industrial District, and B-5: Central Business District.

Light Industrial District

The Light Industrial District allows for light manufacturing, processing, and distributing. Buildings are required to be no taller than 45 feet, and their use cannot generate more nuisances in comparison to other area uses, thus restricting potential noise or pollution problems which could be detrimental to the health safety and welfare of the community.

Central Business District

The Central Business District al-

lows uses such as grocery stores, offices, laundromats, retail, and even bars and nightclubs with special use permits. CBD zoning limits building height to 5 stories. This zoning serves as the core of a city's density.

Other Types of Zoning

R-8: Urban Residential District is present at the corner of Marshall Street and 21st Street. R-8 is applied to older neighborhoods to ensure infill and redevelopment is consistent with current development. R-8 has a traditional neighborhood development and sustainability focus. The R-8 zone currently contains a few rowhouses at the edge of the study area.

R-63: Multi-Family Urban Residential District is zoned at the corner of Broad Street and 21st Street. R-63 allows for denser residential use, focusing on the promotion of a pedestrian oriented, residential zone with limited local-serving commercial and other small business opportunities. In Shockoe Bottom, this zoning contains a large apartment complex which provides a pedestrian oriented streetscape and a mix of uses at the street level.

B-6: Mixed-Use Business District can be found fronting Marshall Street between 19th Street and 20th Street. The intent of this district is to encourage infill, redevelopment, and the adaptive reuse of existing structures. In Shockoe Bottom, this zoning is applied to a large undeveloped lot.

LAND USE

Land Use information was gathered using the 2008 Downtown Master Plan. A map of documented land use can be found in.

Downtown Urban Center

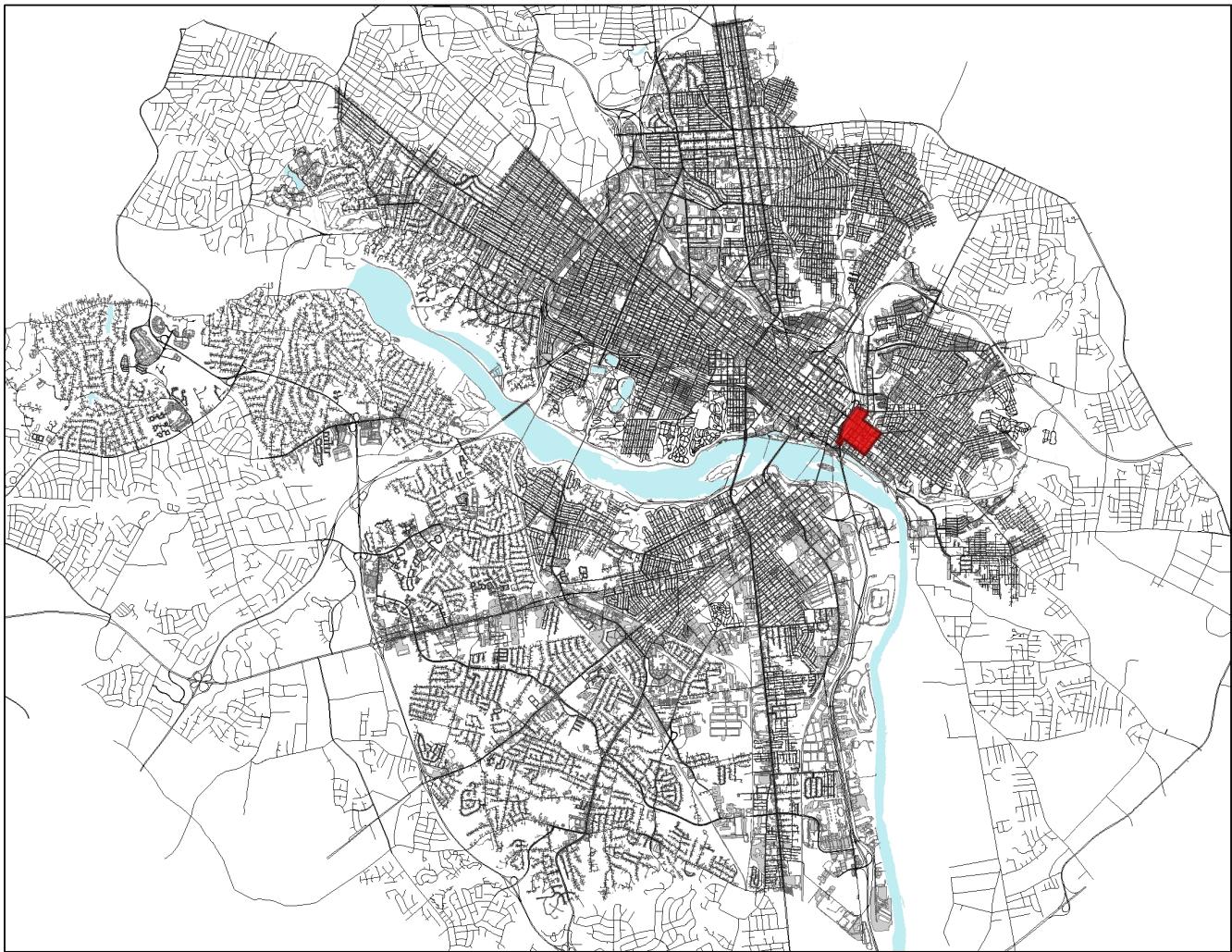
The majority of the study area is designated as a Downtown Urban Center, focusing on high density development with a mix of uses. According to the 2008 Downtown Master Plan, neighboring Shockoe Slip is a prime example of the Downtown Urban Center because of its density, mix of uses, tall buildings, and high pedestrian activity.

General Urban Area

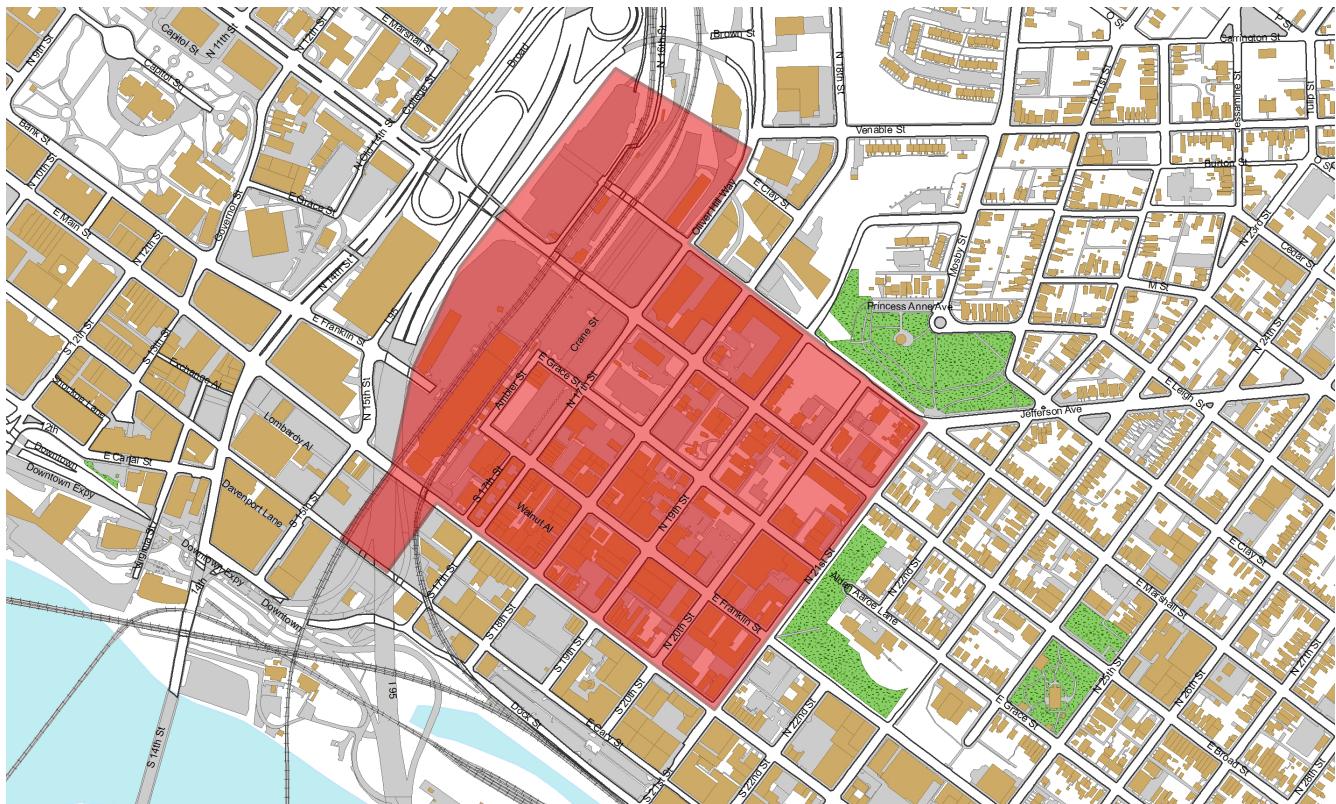
Also present in the study area is a General Urban Area, bounded by 18th Street, Marshall Street, 21st Street, and Grace Street. General Urban Areas are medium density with a mix of uses. This is also exemplified by Jackson Ward, where the historic pattern of settlement along the original street layout is well displayed.

Civic Area

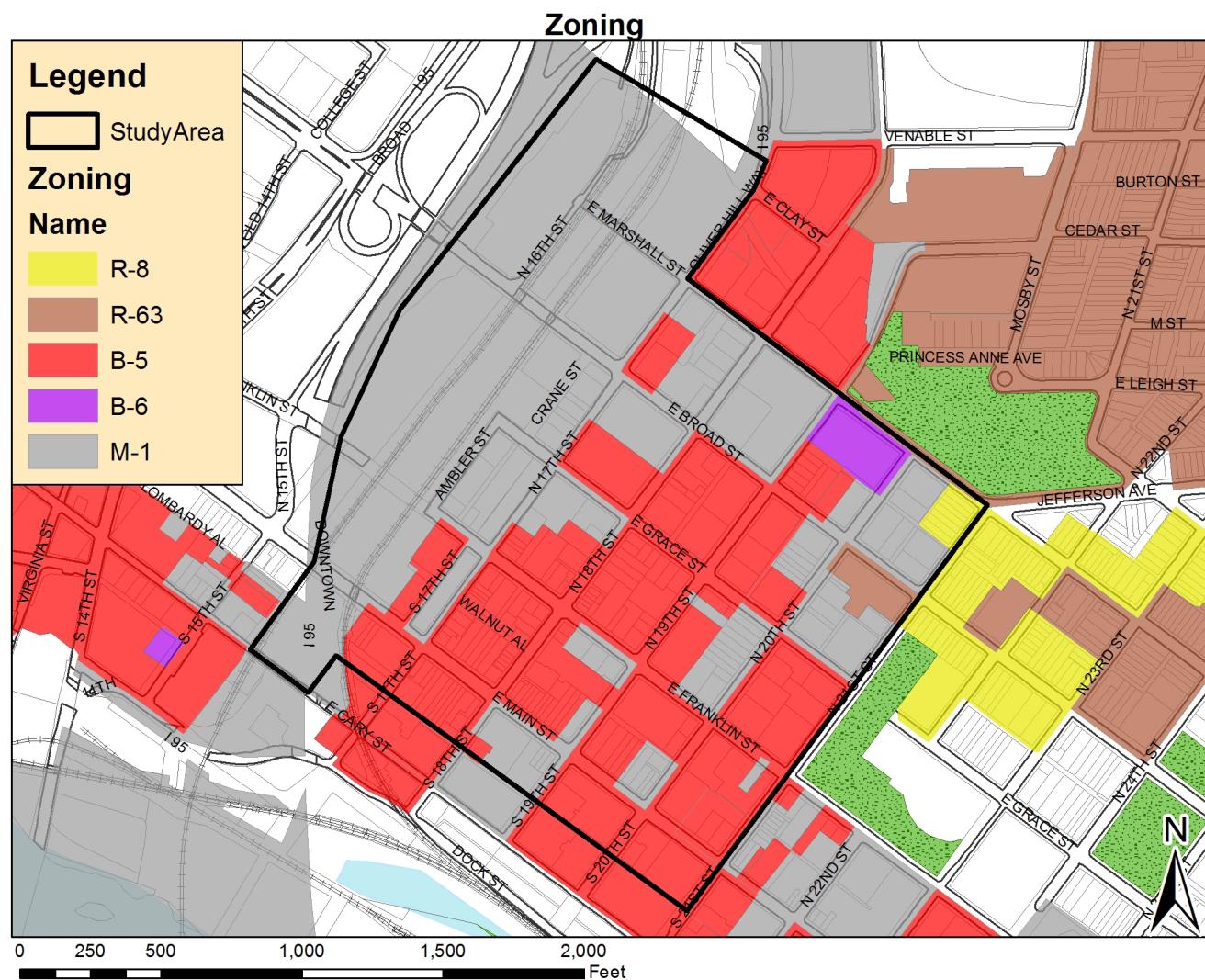
Finally, the Main Street Station and Trainshed with its surrounding parking lots are designated as a Civic Area. Civic Areas are buildings and open spaces designated for public use. The Virginia State Capitol and its grounds are another example of the Civic Area designation.



LOCATION OF THE SHOCKOE BOTTOM STUDY AREA WITHIN THE CITY OF RICHMOND

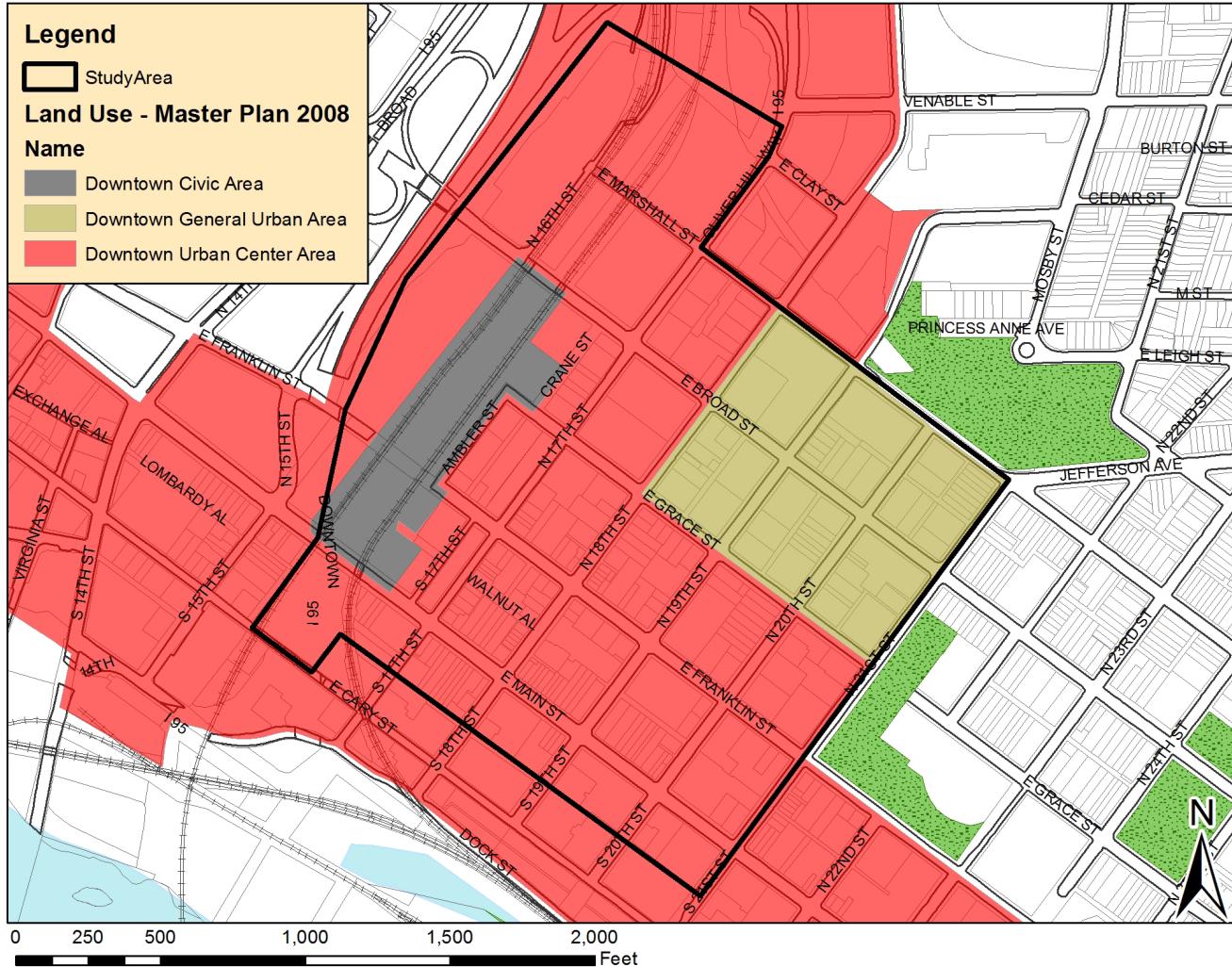


SHOCKOE BOTTOM STUDY AREA



ZONING IN SHOCKOE BOTTOM

Land Use



LAND USE IN SHOCKOE BOTTOM

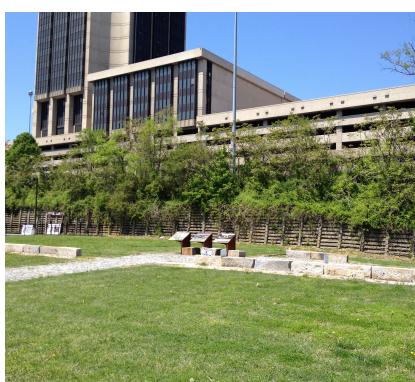


HISTORIC RESOURCES

As the original settlement in the City of Richmond, the Shockoe Valley is rich with historic resources, the preservation of which contribute to an enhanced community identity fostering civic pride. The Shockoe Valley Community Conservation plan seeks to encourage the appreciation of these resources and the embrace of this rich heritage. This section of the plan will focus on three topics: archaeological resources, architectural resources, and heritage interpretation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Archaeological resources, though hidden from sight, have the potential to provide greater contexts or even a new understanding of a given area. Existing as physical reminders of now lost communities and periods of history, archaeological resources contain educational, cultural, spiritual, and even economic value. The difficulty in protecting these resources is that they are largely underground.



LUMPKIN'S SLAVE JAIL SITE AS OF APRIL 2014

Shockoe Bottom, being Richmond's oldest neighborhood, is no doubt rich in archaeological resources. While some have already been identified, including the Lumpkin's Jail site, it is impossible to definitively claim all sites have been located. Below are recommendations intended to broaden our understanding of the archaeological record of Shockoe Bottom.

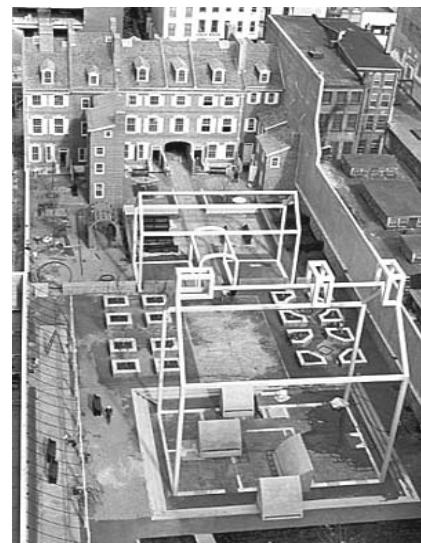
Recommendations

Lumpkin's Jail Site Ghost Frame

A ghost frame structure should be constructed over the Lumpkin's Slave Jail Site. The frame would be similar to the structure built at Franklin Court in Philadelphia and serve as a low cost alternative to large scale museums and excavation sites. This type of archaeological representation will preserve the integrity of the site for future excavations and study. The ghost frame bypasses the groundwater flooding problem that any open-air archaeology site in Shockoe Bottom will incur.

Archaeological Investigations

Requirements for archaeological investigation should be broadened, making excavations a more frequent occurrence. While the Lumpkin's Slave Jail excavation greatly widened the understanding of the Richmond slave trade, many other slave traders are known to have operated throughout the area. Apart from slave trade history, Shockoe Bottom is sure to have other sites from other eras that, through exca-



THE FRANKLIN COURT GHOST FRAME STRUCTURE DESIGNED BY ROBERT VENTURI IN PHILADELPHIA ALLOWS FOR INTERPRETATION WITH MINIMAL MAINTENANCE

vation, could reveal long lost information on the neighborhood and the city.

Archaeological Overlay District

A protective overlay should be defined for the neighborhood to prevent adverse practices against the city's archaeological record. The overlay would mandate the surveying and reporting of archaeological resources prior to development projects. This would include large

“DISCOVER HOW TO VISIT THE PAST AND BRING YESTERDAY’S STORIES INTO OUR LIVES TODAY”

-GILLIAN HOVELL,
ARCHAEOLOGIST

development, grading, and infrastructure improvements but would exclude previously developed lots without potential to contain resources.

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

Some of the oldest surviving structures in the city can be found in Shockoe Bottom. Architectural resources present within the district are some of the most significant, diverse, and highest in integrity of design. In Shockoe Bottom, structures and buildings can be found from every era of development in Richmond. Physical reminders still exist from the city's early development, such as the 1784 Adam Craig house and the 1785 Mason Hall. Sitting on its original location, the Farmers' Market site remains as a representation of the strong city center once found within this district. The large scale warehouses scattered through the district, though no lon-

ger serving their original purpose, act as reminders of Richmond's prosperous industrial era. In many ways, the combination of variety in architectural style make this district representative of the narrative of Richmond's urban development and growth.

Historic buildings have an unquantifiable charm that makes each city, district, and even neighborhood unique from any other. Historic architectural resources have an aesthetic value which cannot be replicated, but can be translated into economic value. Well-maintained historic structures retain more value than newly constructed buildings and the reuse thereof can spur revitalization, which in turn expands the tax base and adds to the local economy. The use of existing architectural resources is the most economically efficient and environmentally sustainable type of development.

Apart from benefiting the economy, historic architectural resources add to the spirit of a neighborhood and foster connections among residents. Facing homogeneity in both architecture and community, people naturally desire unique spaces and places with a visible identity.

Recommendations

Tax Credit Education

Shockoe Bottom should partner with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in order to better educate property owners within the neighborhood about state and



THE POE MUSEUM IS HOUSED IN ONE OF RICHMOND'S OLDEST STRUCTURES

"WE REGRET MUCH OF WHAT WE'VE BUILT; WE REGRET MUCH OF WHAT WE'VE TORN DOWN. BUT WE'VE NEVER REGRETTED PRESERVING ANYTHING."

-DANIEL SACK, ELMWOOD VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

federal tax programs. This partnership should seek to develop guidelines that navigate property owners through the process. This program would aid in closing the financial funding gap for new business as well as ensuring the proper preservation of these buildings.

Matching Grant Program

Based on existing city programs such as the Commercial Area Revitalization Effort (CARE) and the City Arts District Program, a Shockoe Bottom-specific grant program should be created. Requesting that the city match 25 percent of the funding raised by private efforts, the funding gap would be narrowed in order to encourage architectural revitalization. This program would help increase the vibrancy and preserve the historic character of the neighborhood. More on the CARE program and other revitalization efforts can be found in the Small Business Recommendations section.

Review Board

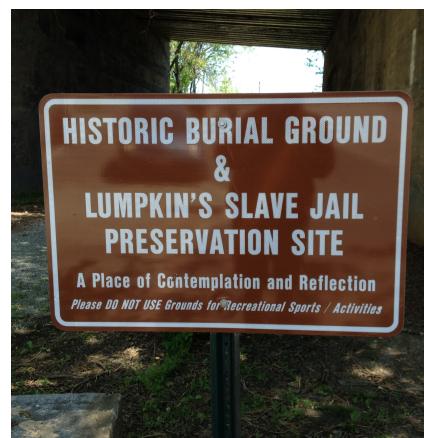
Currently, only eight blocks within the study area are governed by any sort of reviewing body. In order to

better assure preservation of historic structures throughout the district, the Commission of Architectural Review should extend its purview to the remaining blocks of the district.

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

Heritage Interpretation is the written, verbal, or visual communication of historic, cultural, or natural resources. With such a variety of resource types, Shockoe Bottom has a myriad of opportunities to express these resources.

Heritage interpretation connects the visitor to the history and culture of a place. It builds upon the place's existing spirit to enhance the experience of being in the neighborhood. Falling under the scope of heritage interpretation is commemoration and memorialization sites. These types of sites bridge discovery with remembrance.



THE SIGNAGE FOR THE AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND INDICATES THE USAGE OF MEMORIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE SITES

Currently heritage interpretation within Shockoe Bottom is drastically underutilized with only a few examples present at the Lumpkin's Jail site and similar locations along the Slave Trail.

Recommendations

Slave Trail

Branding and wayfinding for the Slave Trail should be more representative of this resource and publicity should be widened. As it exists, the branding and wayfinding for the Richmond Slave Trail is severely underutilized and provides the visitor with a fragmented experience. More signage designed to educate and guide the visitor while increasing public awareness of the trail's cultural significance should be implemented. The focus for the improved signage in Shockoe Bottom and the Slave Trail will center on the antebellum period (1812-1860) in Richmond and the social history of the slave trade as it existed during that time. Signs should include either educational content relevant to the given geographical location and/or clear guidance to the next destination. As for publicity outside of the trail itself, it is essential to advertise the trail on exit signs into downtown Richmond along Interstate 95. Enticing tourism will not only require highway signage but collaboration with GPS systems that can highlight the trail on various devices. Simply providing more awareness about this part of Richmond's heritage will help to attract locals and visitors alike. More on signage can be found in

the Wayfinding Recommendations section.

Augmented Reality

In order to reconnect visitors with Shockoe Bottom's historical appearance, an Augmented Reality network should be created. Several apps such as the Augment application for both IOS and Android devices can provide visitors with a visual tool of how the area looked during various periods. Working with software such as Sketchup, this application provides a visual reconstruction of the past. The Richmond-based app ideally should be available in key areas through the neighborhood with wayfinding signage informing of its presence.

African Cemetery Commemoration

The commemoration area, lying directly East of Interstate 95 and North of Broad street, should feature a memorial. Currently the area is a grass field with cobra flood lighting around the perimeter and center of the field. Issues with the commemoration area are attributed to poor signage and lack of purpose. No focal point exists to appeal to visitors or to give rise to contemplation about the hundred of thousands of slaves who were bought and sold in Shockoe Bottom in the decades leading up to the Civil War. An example of a highly effective model for slave remembrance is the African Burial Ground Memorial in New York City. The Memorial includes an Ancestral Chamber for contemplation, a Remembrance Wall, and



THE AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND IN NEW YORK CITY FEATURES MULTIPLE ELEMENTS AND IS SPECIFICALY DESIGNED FOR THE AFRICANS BURIED ON THIS SITE.

a Libation Court for gatherings. The site is massive and constructed out of black marble, easily attracting visitors. The memorial provides an immersive experience that educates visitors, helping them to comprehend the historical legacy of slavery. A similar memorial site is recommended for Richmond, speaking to the unique experiences shared by slaves in Shockoe Bottom. The commemorative elements should be of multiple components, adequately occupy the existing field space.

“WHEN WE BUILD, LET US THINK THAT WE BUILD FOREVER. LET IT NOT BE FOR PRESENT DELIGHT NOR FOR PRESENT USE ALONE. LET IT BE SUCH WORK AS OUR DESCENDANTS WILL THANK US FOR; AND LET US THINK, AS WE LAY STONE ON STONE, THAT A TIME IS TO COME WHEN THOSE STONES WILL BE HELD SACRED BECAUSE OUR HANDS HAVE TOUCHED THEM, AND THAT MEN WILL SAY, AS THEY LOOK UPON THE LABOR AND WROUGHT SUBSTANCE OF THEM, ‘SEE! THIS OUR FATHER DID FOR US.’”

-JOHN RUSKIN, ART CRITIC

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Having described the importance of preserving the past, it is equally essential that Shockoe Bottom looks to the future. With so many development opportunities and a matching amount of different, sometimes clashing, ideas, Shockoe Bottom has the groundwork to fulfill any of its lacking needs, as well as the ability to do so with community conservation in mind. This section of the plan features three concentrations: Small Business, Infill and Re-development, and Connectivity.

SMALL BUSINESS

Small businesses are a vital component of economic growth. Not only do they provide for larger businesses in the area, they also provide goods and services locally. Small businesses are essential to the economic development of Shockoe Bottom.

With the redevelopment of old warehouses into multifamily dwellings over the past ten years, there has been a subsequent influx of residents into Shockoe Bottom. This growing population has boosted the need for, and number of, small businesses. However, the addition of businesses does not imply an increase in variety. While the area has plenty of restaurants and bars, there is a lack of shopping and local serving retail.

Recommendations Main Street Program

Business owners in Shockoe Bottom should work to establish a



A ROW OF RESTAURANTS AND BARS ALONG MAIN STREET

recognized Virginia Main Street Program. The unified voice of small business owners will be able to leverage the assets of Shockoe Bottom to the wider Richmond region and contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhood, spurring economic development.

Business Recruitment and Incentives

The establishment of a program to actively recruit a variety of commercial businesses in Shockoe Bottom would help to dispel misconceptions about opening businesses therein. To recruit these businesses, existing city business incentives including CARE, Enterprise Zone, and a revolving loan fund should be publicized and their benefits and application processes fully explained to business owners. More on CARE and architectural revital-

“AS FOR REALLY NEW IDEAS OF ANY KIND—NO MATTER HOW ULTIMATELY PROFITABLE OR OTHERWISE SUCCESSFUL SOME OF THEM MIGHT PROVE TO BE—THERE IS NO LEEWAY FOR SUCH CHANCY TRIAL, ERROR AND EXPERIMENTATION IN THE HIGH-OVERHEAD ECONOMY OF NEW CONSTRUCTION. OLD IDEAS CAN SOMETIMES USE NEW BUILDINGS. NEW IDEAS MUST USE OLD BUILDINGS.”

-JANE JACOBS, ACTIVIST

ization can be found in the Architectural Resources Recommendations section.

Special Assessment District Extension

Based on the 2009 Downtown Master Plan inclusion of Shockoe Bottom as a part of downtown, the boundaries of Venture Richmond should be extended to include the neighborhood. The existing Special Assessment District in Richmond is run by Venture Richmond. This city-supported, private organization collects taxes within its boundaries and uses the money to fund initiatives within the district. Inclusion into Venture Richmond would allow Shockoe Bottom to take advantage of initiatives such as the Clean & Safe Program, which helps improve the cleanliness and safety of the Special Assessment District. Because cleanliness and safety are both concerns in Shockoe Bottom, the Clean & Safe Program could be utilized as a quick fix to these problems.

The Farmers Market

A best practice guide for regional markets should be created and focus on vendor attainment, local business partnerships, maintenance, and operation. The 17th Street Farmers Market should be redesigned to allow for more flexible uses of the space. This includes replacing the shed structure with portable, but shade-providing, vendor tents and creating more outdoor cafe seating for adjacent restaurants.

INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT

Shockoe Bottom has recently experienced an increase in developmental growth, and many unused parking lots and buildings provide for even more opportunities. Infill is the development of barren property where structures do not exist. Redevelopment is the restoration of vacant structures which are not serving the community. Infill opportunities are ever present in the neighborhood and allow for unique needs to be filled, due to the large catalogue of shapes and sizes of empty lots. Most redevelopment has been the transformation of former warehouses to multi-family residential dwellings. This redevelopment has mostly focused on mid- to high-income units.



THE GAP BETWEEN THESE TWO BUILDINGS IS A PRIME LOCATION FOR URBAN INFILL

The current zoning for Shockoe Bottom is mostly M-1 (light industrial) and B-5 (Central Business District). There is one parcel which is zoned B-6 (mixed-use business district). With the majority of parcels zoned M-1, the development of those parcels is restrained. For the M-1 zoning classification, the city of Richmond zoning ordinance states that “no building shall be erected for dwelling use or converted to such use unless permitted by the board of zoning appeals.” (City of Richmond Zoning Ordinance) Based on the recent trend of residential development in the neighborhood, the M-1 zoning classification does not align with the future land use vision for Shockoe Bottom. Thus it is a barrier to future economic development in the neighborhood.

Recommendations

Rezoning

In order to spur infill and redevelopment, certain parcels in Shockoe Bottom should be rezoned. Economic growth can be encouraged by rezoning the M-1 parcels to align with current development trends in Shockoe Bottom such as B-5 or B-6. This would also help remove the need for variances and special-use permits.

Infill Incentives

Shockoe Bottom-specific infill and redevelopment financial incentives should be offered to developers and businesses investors to draw them to the various empty lots and development zones within the area. Tax abatement and other financial

incentives would encourage the infilling of unused parcels, particularly along Oliver Hill Way where massive empty lots are stigmatized due to flooding concerns.

Urban Design Overlay

Form-based code implemented as a design overlay, should combine with the proposed zoning changes. Form-based code focuses on design first, use second where zoning has the opposite approach. This overlay would dictate the design of buildings, thus ensuring they do not disrupt the existing built environment of Shockoe Bottom. The code would dictate massing, which is the way in which the total volume of a building is manifested. For example, any large-scale buildings should be massed like the old warehouses in the area: as a flat-fronted, box like structure. Massing takes precedent here over dictation of style as style requirements are often too restrictive and result in bland buildings.

“WHAT COUNTS MORE THAN STYLE IS WHETHER ARCHITECTURE IMPROVES OUR EXPERIENCE OF THE BUILT WORLD; WHETHER IT MAKES US WONDER WHY WE NEVER NOTICED PLACES IN QUITE THIS WAY BEFORE.”

-ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE,
ARCHITECTURE CRITIC

If mass is the emphasis, buildings are more likely to fit, regardless of architectural style. Although use is not the dominant focus, design can shape the future use of a space. All buildings should be oriented to the pedestrian on the first floor and include store fronts to continue Shockoe Bottom's long standing



THE TOP IMAGE IS OF AN ORIGINAL WAREHOUSE IN SHOCKOE BOTTOM. THE BOTTOM IS OF A RECENTLY BUILT APARTMENT COMPLEX. ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT FEATURE HISTORIC MATERIALS, THE MASSING OF THE NEWER BUILDING MIMICS THAT OF THE OLDER.

trend of mixed use development

CONNECTIVITY

Well-connected infrastructure is essential to the urban environment. Connectivity includes all forms of movement through a space: principally transit lines, highways, streets, sidewalks, and bicycle infrastruc-

ture. The better the connectivity of these movement systems, the more modal options are available, and thus the easier to travel to, from, and around a well-connected area.

Shockoe Bottom suffers from a lack of connectivity in multiple categories, though overall it is not severely disconnected. Rail lines from Main Street Station are limited to four trips a day. Because the rails are owned by freight lines, Amtrak commuters are of a lower priority. This forces much of the regional population to use the Staples Mill Station in nearby Henrico County, which is accessible exclusively by automobile. In front of Main Street Station, under I-95, is Richmond's Megabus stop. The city bus line, operated by The Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) has several stops in Shockoe bottom concentrated primarily on Main & Broad Streets. Although there are a variety of routes, GRTC routes generally, and especially in Shockoe, are not well connected with each other. This results in awkward routes and long wait times for transfers. From I-95, Shockoe

“FREQUENT STREETS AND SHORT BLOCKS ARE VALUABLE BECAUSE OF THE FABRIC OF INTRICATE CROSS-USE THAT THEY PERMIT AMONG THE USERS OF A CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD.”

-JANE JACOBS, ACTIVIST

Bottom is accessible from exit 74B: Franklin Street. Two streets, Grace and Franklin, have been cut off by the train station, thus disrupting the original street grid and further limiting movement options.

While the connectivity issues present in Shockoe Bottom are not typically detrimental, Shockoe Bottom's status as a transportation hub places a strict importance on connectivity. Shockoe Bottom, once accessed, connects to the entire nation through rail and bus lines. For this reason, the recommendations below seek to bring Shockoe Bottom to an elevated status of regional transportation center.

Recommendations

Downtown-Church Hill Circulator

A Circulator Bus running from N 5th Street to N 25th Street on Main Street and Broad Street should be instituted. A GRTC or privately-operated circulator will provide higher efficiency than a standard GRTC line because of its short, contained route, and higher volume of trips. The Circulator should start at Brown's Island, travel to Broad, stop at 10th Street by the Capitol, stop at 17th Street in Shockoe Bottom, travel up to Church Hill and stop at 25th Street, travel to Main Street, stop at 20th Street near the Holocaust Museum, stop again at the Main Street Station In Shockoe Bottom, stop at 13th near Shockoe Slip, and return to Brown's Island. The Circulator will offer tourists as well as residents new to public transportation an easier and less

intimidating mode of transit. The circulator should adapt to support different rider populations throughout the day, such as those seeking tourist attractions and those seeking nightlife. The Circulator should have bicycle carrying capabilities.

Preserve the Grid

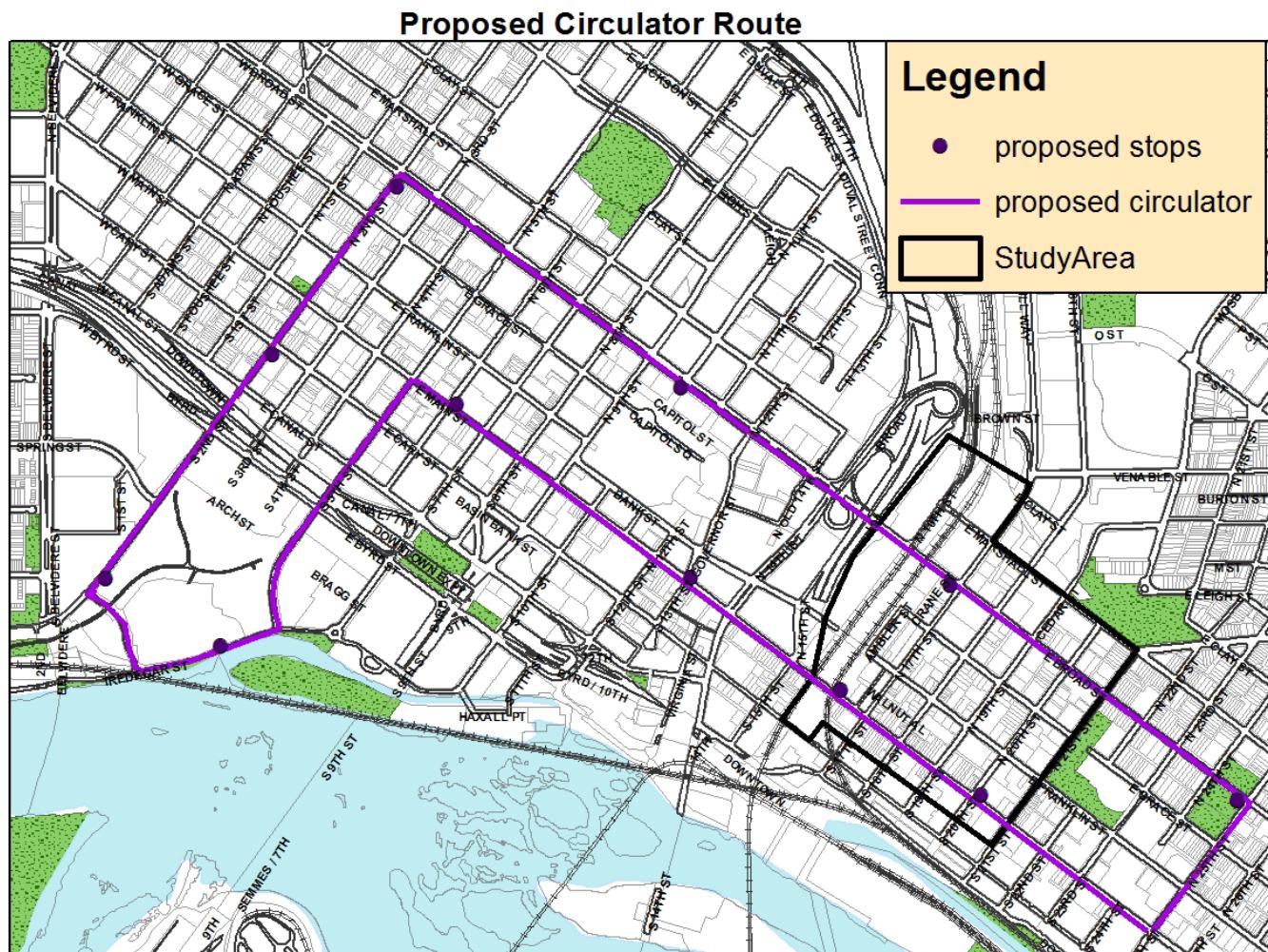
The Shockoe Bottom street grid should remain free of further disruptions in the future. The grid must stay as intact to allow multiple route possibilities for pedestrians, cyclists, and automobiles alike. Disruptions in the grid significantly impair all modes of transportation, especially pedestrian. Incomplete grids result in superblocks, which can greatly discourage pedestrian travel. It is essential that the Shockoe Bottom street grid stays as intact as possible in the future to allow multiple route possibilities for pedestrians, cyclists, and automobiles alike.

Further Investigation of Rail Lines

Solutions to the limited rail travel from Shockoe Bottom should be further investigated. As high speed rail becomes a more plausible reality on the East Coast, Richmond is a likely candidate to be the close of a Northeastern high speed rail line. This will be entirely impossible with the congestion problems caused by freight-dominance on the shared rails of Richmond and the condition of those rails, which cannot accommodate high speeds.



THE TERMINATION OF FRANKLIN STREET UNDER MAIN STREET STATION



THE PROPOSED ROUTE OF THE CIRCULATOR BUS WHICH WOULD CONNECT DOWNTOWN TO SHOCKOE BOTTOM AND CHURCH HILL



LOCAL HONEY



Although Shockoe Bottom is a dining, nightlife, and entertainment destination with rich history, it faces many challenges in becoming a cohesive, vibrant community. Shockoe represents the heart of the city; containing both a commercial nucleus and large residential neighborhood, constituting a unique mix of new development and historic structures and infrastructures. Bettering streetscape, improving wayfinding, and enhancing neighborhood identity will build upon the life that already exists in Shockoe Bottom and better reflect the area's unique social and cultural character.

STREETSCAPE

With streetscape, the street is a place, not a connector between places. Streetscape is composed of the physical elements of the street: from one side of building faces to the other, and is measured primarily in articulation and enclosure. Articulation is the quality of visual interest provided by enclosing features. High articulation would be a set of unaligned, yet cohesive building faces along a street. Low articulation would be a long, flat-faced building stretching along the block. Enclosure is the room-like quality of an outdoor space. High enclosure creates an oppressive, claustrophobic feeling, where low enclosure, creates a feeling of exposure. For enclosure, a mid-level, skewed to high enclosure is preferred.

The streetscape of historic Shockoe Bottom was oriented to its in-

dustrial uses. Comprised of narrow sidewalks, a lack of street trees, exposed power cables, and industrial lighting, the pedestrian was of minor concern. This historic foundation has left the streetscapes of Shockoe Bottom with little basis to create a pleasant, modern, pedestrian-oriented experience. Street trees, for example, though not historically accurate, create a better streetscape for a walkable community, especially in a climate like Richmond's.

The streets of Shockoe Bottom typically feature pedestrian-oriented enclosure, with decent articulation. Piece-by-piece built, two to three story structures usually line both sides of the street, with large scale buildings spread throughout. Trees are generally absent and have little room for placement. Most streets are one way and two lanes.

Recommendations

Street Trees and Awnings

Where possible, deciduous, non-ornamental street trees should be planted. An alternative shading



CYCLISTS ON MAIN STREET

solution where street trees cannot be placed on the street can come in the form of awnings. The climate of Richmond requires shade in the summer for pedestrian comfort. While trees are ideal, not every sidewalk in Shockoe Bottom is wide enough to place a tree well. Awnings serve a similar purpose to street trees and act as visual attractors while adding to the articulation of buildings.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Amenities

The availability of pedestrian and bicycle amenities should be increased in the neighborhood. Currently, Shockoe Bottom has a noticeable lack of both pedestrian and bicycle amenities. For the pedestrian, installations of benches, planters, trash cans, water fountains are recommended wherever feasible. For the cyclists, bike racks, showers, and a servicing station are recommended for placement at the start of the Capital to Capital Bike Trail near Main Street Station. Amenities should follow a unique design theme that distinguishes them as strictly Shockoe Bottom's. More on creating Shockoe Bottom's brand can be found in the Neighborhood Identity Recommendations section.

“WE WANT TO TRANSFORM OUR SIDEWALKS NOT ONLY INTO PLACES WHERE YOU CAN WALK, BUT WHERE YOU CAN LIVE.”

-JENNIFER HEEMAN, CURATIVOS URBANOS

Infrastructure Improvements.

Shockoe Bottom should adopt a complete street vision to be adopted street by street over time. Complete streets fulfill the needs of motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by creating safe and efficient, designated travel zones for each. These infrastructure improvements include separated bicycle lanes or sharrows when lanes are not feasible, improved sidewalks and buffers, and improved visibility for automobiles. Shockoe Bottom's complete street concept could also plan for the potential arrival of Bus Rapid Transit in the near future.

WAYFINDING

Wayfinding is the decision-making process by which people orient and navigate. Wayfinding typically comes in the form of signage. An effective wayfinding signage system has the power to boost traffic efficiency, improve accessibility and visitation of area destinations, make streets safer, and give a sense of the cultural identity of an area.

Shockoe Bottom contains many noteworthy tourist destinations, including the Edgar Allan Poe Museum, Virginia Holocaust Museum, Lumpkin's Slave Jail Site, Richmond's African Burial Ground, and Main Street Station, each hosting a high volume of visitors. When lacking a well-planned wayfinding signage system, residents and visitors may find difficulty in moving through a space. Within Shockoe Bottom, there are four different wayfinding

sign designs. A lack of consistency reduces the importance, impact and noticeability of the signs. With plans for Main Street Station to include a regional visitors center, Shockoe Bottom can expect an increase in tourists. This increase requires major improvements to currently implemented wayfinding in the area.

Recommendations

Implement wayfinding signage system

In 2012, the city of Richmond approved a comprehensive wayfinding signage system to be used throughout the city. These signs maintain consistency and cohesion. Implementation of the city's wayfinding signage system throughout Shockoe Bottom will significantly improve current wayfinding detriments.

Smartphone application

A smartphone application for residents and tourists should be developed to aid in the navigation of Shockoe Bottom and the rest of the city. This application would feature areas of interest such as the slave trail, museums, dining options, and parking. Linking the application with local and regional public transportation systems will not only make visiting Shockoe Bottom easier, but also encourage non-automobile forms of transportation. More on smartphone technology can be found in the Heritage Interpretation Recommendations section.

Neighborhood Identity

Identity is the backbone of a neigh-



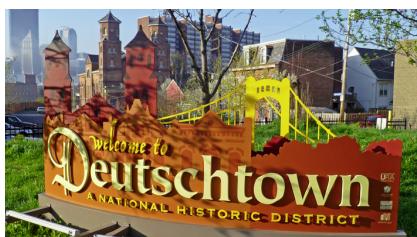
CURRENT GATEWAY SIGNAGE FOR SHOCKOE BOTTOM

borhood. It can foster cohesion and pride from those within and create recognition among those outside. While Shockoe bottom has many distinctive assets such as Main Street Station and the Farmers Market, the full extent of the area is not often visualized as a unified neighborhood. Building off of the identity already present, the defining of Shockoe Bottom will serve to expand and enhance the identity of this neighborhood.

Recommendations

Branding

Shockoe Bottom should have a clear and distinct brand; a font and symbology representative of this neighborhood. Branded as an area to live, work, and play, this new symbology will be used throughout the neighborhood as signage other designation. This will develop a sense of cohesion in the area, bringing different nodes together under the same brand. The brand should also be used to attract Richmond metro residents and tourists to the area, much like the RVA logo that attracts a statewide population to the city. Besides the well-known RVA logo example, the branding campaign of Deutchtown in the Northside of Pittsburgh is a clear reflection of the history and landmarks of the neighborhood. More on wayfinding can be found in the Wayfinding section.



DEUTCHTOWN, PITTSBURGH FEATURES UNIQUE AND MEMORABLE NEIGHBORHOOD BRANDING

Neighborhood Gateways

Gateways should be used to define the boundaries of a neighborhood. A Shockoe Bottom Gateway should be placed at Main Street and Broad Street, as mentioned in the Down-

town Master Plan, to welcome people to the area and draw attention to the neighborhood brand. The gateway itself could be a public art project, rather than a tradition gate-like structure. Here, public art that harkens back to the industrial or market past would be both interesting and appropriate.

Shockoe Bottom Neighborhood Association and Business Association

Local businesses and the Shockoe Bottom Neighborhood Association are important resources and should advise in the branding process and regulate the area after a brand is established. A gathering place should be established to conduct meetings. The neighborhood association should be a vessel to reach out to residents of the area and organize events for neighbors. This organization should also be the liaison to the City of Richmond. In order to have a unified community, the neighborhood organization should have an active role in the neighborhood that sees that projects are completed and citizens are heard. The neighborhood association should be accessible to the neighborhood through social media and regular meetings. The neighborhood association is an important resource to monitor issues that may arise in the neighborhood to foster a healthy community. A business association should also be formed to unify commercial corridors and bring awareness to businesses that may qualify for grants or need publicity. More on small businesses

can be found in the Small Business section

Every Block and Neighborhood Website

Shockoe Bottom should have an online forum similar to "Every Block." Currently only available in Chicago, this website is free and easily accessible to businesses and neighbors to draw attention to upcoming events and voice concerns. This forum could be a part of a larger neighborhood website, also being recommended, that would give more general news for the area.

"ALMOST NOBODY TRAVELS WILLINGLY FROM SAMENESS TO SAMENESS AND REPETITION TO REPETITION, EVEN IF THE PHYSICAL EFFORT REQUIRED IS TRIVIAL."

-JANE JACOBS, ACTIVIST

An aerial photograph of a city skyline under a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there's a red brick building with a grey roof and some industrial structures. A street runs through the middle ground, lined with parked cars and utility poles. In the background, there are numerous buildings of various heights and architectural styles, including a prominent tall tan skyscraper and several lower brick buildings.

CONCLUSION

The Shockoe Bottom Community Conservation Plan proactive, intending to bridge the past to the future, without bypassing the present community. In this document, preservation and growth were presented in a reality completely separate from existing plans, yet entirely harmonious with what has been envisioned for this neighborhood.

The plan outlines how to preserve historic resources, how to promote economic development, and how to beautify and brand the neighborhood. The recommendations for each are not lofty ideas, but highly plausible ones which have the full potential of implementation.

It is our hope that this plan is a conversation starter on a not-so-new idea: community conservation. This concept, which has been held for decades without a name by urbanists, intends to save and enhance everything that is loved about a neighborhood. Shockoe Bottom is the heart of Richmond and planning for its future requires the conservation of the community.

We leave you with our last call-out quote to the left, which exemplifies the result of good community conservation.

“A GOOD CITY IS LIKE A
GOOD PARTY – PEOPLE STAY
MUCH LONGER THAN REALLY
NECESSARY BECAUSE THEY ARE
ENJOYING THEMSELVES”

-JAN GEHL, ARCHITECT

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All other photos taken by Josh Mallow

GIS DATA

Data provided by City of Richmond GIS, maps created by Chelsea Hartman