



Stefanie K. Taillon
Secretary of Natural and
Historic Resources

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

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Director

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September 26, 2025

Mr. Kevin J. Vonck
Director of Planning & Development Review
City of Richmond
900 E. Broad St., Room 511
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: City of Richmond Zoning Code Refresh

Dear Mr. Vonck:

As the City of Richmond moves towards finalizing revisions to its Zoning Ordinance, the Department of Historic Resources (DHR), which serves as Virginia's State Historic Preservation Office, offers the following for your consideration.

Through its many programs, DHR leverages historic preservation objectives to support goals of affordable housing, sustainability, and smart growth. The *Richmond 300 Master Plan* clearly reflects the City's understanding of the value of its historic properties in defining the character and economic potential of its neighborhoods (Goal 3). To establish a framework by which the City may realize the real economic benefit of historic preservation, the Master Plan calls for the creation of a city-wide preservation plan.

As directed by the Master Plan and with financial assistance from DHR, the City has drafted a *Cultural Heritage Stewardship Plan*, which is currently under consideration by an *ad hoc* subcommittee of the Planning Commission. Amongst its many valuable suggestions, the Stewardship Plan recommends that the City "Develop zoning districts that support, protect, and enhance neighborhood character, especially in areas that are not protected by or not interested in establishing an Old and Historic District" (Section 5.2, Objective 4), a recommendation that was identified as a priority for over 64% of respondents in your 2023 public survey.

Rezoning should respect the existing character, scale, and massing of the City's historic districts, regardless of whether they are local, state, or federally designated. As a Certified Local

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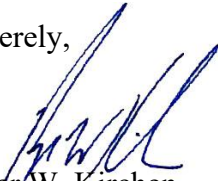
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Government recognized by the National Park Service, the City has made a commitment to promote viable communities through national historic preservation standards. We encourage the City to adopt the Stewardship Plan and seriously consider its recommendations prior to finalizing revisions to its Zoning Ordinance.

As always, DHR stands ready to assist the City in meeting its historic preservation goals. If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance to the City as it works through these important initiatives, please do not hesitate to contact me at roger.kirchen@dhr.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



Roger W. Kirchen
Deputy Director for Preservation Programs

c. Kimberly M. Chen, City of Richmond

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