

## **Executive Summary of Analysis of Past Jackson Ward Plans**

Planning staff read and analyzed 13 plans that were developed for Jackson Ward from 1978 to 2008 and found many consistencies. Jackson Ward's place in history as a center of Black culture and commerce is well established and the 40 blocks that make up the historic district are some of the least altered blocks in Richmond. All reports wanted any plans to preserve existing structures where possible, particularly the large blocks of rowhomes that remained in good historic condition. Across all plans it is acknowledged that 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is the historic commercial center. Plans consistently arranged for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to remain the commercial center of the neighborhood and planned to grow it into a cultural and entertainment destination street. The revitalization of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street was anchored by the restoration of the Hippodrome and the preservation and expansion of the Maggie Walker House National Historic Site.

Plans consistently included enhancements and improvements to the public infrastructure such as widened sidewalks, street trees, benches, trash cans, and adequate lighting. Most plans included goals related to façade improvements and the rehabilitation of vacant or distressed property.

Whether it was a neighborhood plan or a market analysis, all reports consider Jackson Ward to be roughly bound by Belvidere, I-95, W Broad, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Some plans acknowledged that Jackson Ward was historically one neighborhood that was split by I-95, but most plans only focus on Jackson Ward south of I-95. The 2000 North Jackson Ward Neighborhood Strategy plan was the only report to focus on the area north of I-95. A pedestrian bridge over I-95 once connected North Jackson Ward and South Jackson Ward, however, the 1991 Jackson Place Master Plan called for its removal and it was demolished in 1999. A later plan suggested rebuilding the social fabric by using the existing 1<sup>st</sup> Street bridge over I-95 as a connection to rebuild the community but stopped short of suggesting any other type of connection. Finally, the 2000 North Jackson Ward Neighborhood Strategy suggested a complete elimination or substantial reduction of Gilpin Court using HOPE VI funds. HOPE VI was a federal program started in 1994 that aimed to convert crowded, public housing into lower density mixed use communities. The Neighborhood Strategy envisioned an urban mixed use, low-density single-family homeownership community.

Some plans call out specific programs such as CARE funding, Neighborhoods in Bloom, and the Main Street Program. The city's CARE funds targeted façade improvements along priority image streets. A program called Neighborhoods in Bloom was mentioned in two plans. Neighborhoods in Bloom focused community development block grants (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership funding in 'impact blocks' in a smaller set of neighborhoods to jumpstart revitalization. According to the 2000 Master Plan, Jackson Ward was one of the chosen neighborhoods. The 2008 Downtown Plan states that the Neighborhoods in Bloom funds went toward building and façade restorations in Jackson Ward. The National Trust for Historic Preservation operated a Main Street Program. Jackson Ward was the first urban community given this designation and was considered a 'demonstration' community. Participation in this program provided access to intensive technical assistance for economic revitalization, historic preservation, and the creation of new jobs.

Each of these plans and studies referenced other plans and studies. Some were found and have been analyzed, others have not been found.