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Dear Candidates for Mayor of the City of Richmond,

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to make Richmond a better place!

At Historic Richmond, we believe that Richmond's irreplaceable built environment defines its distinctive character, and that maintaining and building on that unique sense of place is fundamental to its brilliant future. Richmond is a top-tier American city and its unique and historic built environment is a cornerstone of its greatness.

Below are questions regarding a range of topics that we care about deeply. Please let us know how you plan to address these issues if elected. We would be most grateful if you could respond on or before **September 30, 2016**.

Thank you,  
Historic Richmond

**1. What is your vision for the City of Richmond and how does Richmond's historic built environment factor into your vision?**

Through the development of the next Master Plan, the next Mayor has the opportunity to shape what Richmond will look like thirty years from now. This is about more than the 4 or 8 years that I am Mayor, this is about putting Richmond on a path to success, as opposed to being a cautionary tale for missed opportunity. My goal is to ensure that city government tells Richmonders that they *matter*. I want to send a message to our children that they matter by strengthening our public schools, investing in their education, and providing every child in this city with access to a free after school enrichment program. I want to tell our families and citizens that they matter by providing them with the basic services that they deserve - we will fill the potholes and cut the grass, and we will do it efficiently and transparently. Richmond's historic built environment is part of what makes our city a unique and desirable place to live, work, and visit, and the new Master Plan gives us an opportunity to preserve and maintain our built environment and sense of history while also embracing the new ideas that will make us a 21st century city.

**2. Which neighborhoods or districts do you see as a focus for new or different land use strategies? Do you support the City's Old and Historic District zoning overlay districts and the Commission of Architectural Review?**

It is vitally important that we preserve Richmond's architectural heritage, while at the same time ensuring that those structures can be adapted for appropriate, modern-day uses. We have a rich diversity of architectural styles here from Greek revival to Italianate to Federal, and as such it is important to have mechanisms in place like the Commission of Architectural Review to protect our valuable building stock. However, we must also allow for non profit and private sector creativity when retrofitting historic buildings for contemporary use. I see the Jefferson Davis corridor as an area ripe for a new development strategy. No longer an industrial hub, this

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neighborhood presents ample opportunity for new affordable housing, for example. As one of the poorest districts in Richmond, this kind of responsible redevelopment could go a long way towards reducing the concentration of poverty.

**3. The City has thousands of tax delinquent parcels, more than 1,500 with vacant structures. How would you address the problem of tax delinquencies, vacant structures and blight? Which historic neighborhoods do you see as ripe for revitalization and how best do you expect to accomplish that revitalization?**

Every day that a property sits vacant or blighted, Richmond loses money. We cannot afford to fund our priorities in public education, crime, or housing if we do not expand our tax base. Tax delinquent houses are low-hanging fruit -- getting them back on the rolls quickly will not only increase the city's revenue projections but will make many of our neighborhoods more desirable places to live. My understanding is that the backlog is at the City Attorney's office - as Mayor I will provide the City Attorney with the resources necessary, whether than be internal or through an external third party, to get thousands of homes back on the rolls each year, not hundreds. However, we need to support innovative development strategies like the Community Land Trust to avoid displacement of our most vulnerable citizens, particularly seniors on a fixed income. In terms of specific neighborhoods, I see a lot of blighted and vacant homes when I am knocking on doors in North Church Hill. As a former resident of Church Hill, I think the area is ripe for revitalization, and by taking advantage of the Historic Tax Credit program, we preserve the historic heritage of the neighborhood at the same time.

**4. The James River is an unparalleled natural and cultural resource, unique to Richmond. What is your vision for the riverfront along both the north and south banks of the river? What is your approach to riverfront development and open spaces? How do you plan to expand both visual and physical access to the James River?**

I will make sure more people and communities will have access to the James River. Working to fund priorities, find corporate and nonprofit sponsorships for programs, and connecting students to the James River will all be part of my focus in supporting the James River Park System. I will work with the James River Association on assessing the priorities and setting and achieving ambitious goals. There has already been a lot of work done - but we still have work to do. The Riverfront Plan, in particular, set forth terrific goals but most have not yet been realized. People in Richmond are tired of seeing City Government make plans, debate, and then never implement what it has set out to do. In my administration, City Hall will be acting - not debating - and working to expedite progress on the Richmond Riverfront Plan.

**5. The Shockoe Valley is a unique cultural resource with a complex history. What is your vision for this neighborhood?**

As a former resident of Shockoe Bottom, I love this neighborhood. I am glad we did not make the unpopular decision to build a shiny new, not to mention expensive to the tune of \$80m, stadium in this historic neighborhood. But we need to do a better job of supporting the local businesses in the area, attracting shoppers and diners from elsewhere in the region to spend their money here. We have rolled out the red carpet for the Redskins, the UCI Bike Race, and Stone Brewing -- we need to roll out the red carpet for our locally-owned small businesses, the backbone of our local economy. We need to prioritize our infrastructure failures, like potholes, broken sidewalks, and crumbling alleys in Shockoe, as well as streetscape improvements like planting more trees for shade. I also feel very strongly that Shockoe Valley presents a long-overdue opportunity to formally memorialize those ancestors who built this city and who continue to make it the cultural capital of our Commonwealth.

**6. Broad Street traditionally has been Richmond's grand avenue and widest street. Historically it was a commercial shopping corridor and heart of its historic theater district. Today, the area between N. Belvidere and N. First Street (which is an Old and Historic District zoning overlay district) is being revitalized as an arts district. VCU's Monroe Park and MCV campuses continue to grow. But Broad Street has not yet seen a complete revitalization. What is your vision for continued revitalization of the Broad Street corridor in downtown Richmond?**

Broad Street is the main east-west thoroughfare of Richmond, and as Virginia's "front porch", we need to do a better job of preserving and revitalizing a once-grand and booming commercial district. I am encouraged by development of historic buildings we have seen so far - the Central National Bank building, for example - but we need to fill in the gaps of vacant storefronts in between to make the neighborhood complete. This requires working with the private sector and the local business community, as well as neighborhood and civic associations and the department of economic and community development, to encourage revitalization of this key artery. With the GRTC Pulse coming in 2017, we also have a great opportunity for transit-oriented development around bus stops and bus routes, something the Broad Street neighborhood can benefit greatly from. When I am Mayor, City Hall will be a much more responsive place: it will not take six months to obtain a business license or Certificate of Occupancy, and we will have a much faster turnaround time on basic services. Potholes, broken sidewalks, and crumbling alleys currently plague this neighborhood - that will change when I am Mayor.

**7. How do you think archaeology should be incorporated into the City's land use policies?**

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Richmond has a rich history, I believe we need to protect and preserve it. However, any archaeological ordinance would need to be implemented in a balanced way that does not serve as a barrier to pragmatic and smart growth.

**8. How do you plan to organize your efforts in economic development and community development?**

I commit to finding top leads in City Hall for; economic development, community development, development and review, and planning. As a city, we need to fix our permitting process so folks can see a return on their dollars faster. No one should have to wait six months for a building permit. As mayor, I will be at the table for every deal and make sure they are the best deals for our city. It's time to start asking how businesses are going to invest in public education and our communities by hiring Richmond residents. We need to make sure our workforce is competitive and our communities are strong.

**9. What is your vision for connecting people and places to ensure a wholly vibrant City?**

The top priority in terms of walking, biking, and infrastructure needs to be building out a comprehensive, thoughtful, and safe network. We also need to think about diversity of the user. Right now, well over 100,000 jobs are inaccessible by public transit, and with 22% of our residents lacking access to a personal vehicle, that is a huge economic problem. GRTC Pulse is a first step in the process, but we need to develop a north-south corridor along Chamberlayne Ave to Hull Street and Jefferson Davis Hwy, and we need to expand the Broad Street line out to the retail jobs in Short Pump and to the Airport. We need to embrace high speed rail at Main Street Station to make us more competitive and connected as a city and region. This is about economics: transportation connects people to jobs, and additional routes will improve the quality of life for all Richmonders.