

Virginia State Capitol Master Plan

March, 2005





COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

February 3, 2005

The Honorable Sandra D. Bowen
Secretary of Administration
202 North Ninth Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Bowen:

Throughout my administration, I have been committed to running state government more effectively and efficiently. From the expansion of our electronic procurement system, eVA, to the consolidation of information technology infrastructure and services, and now to the more efficient use of our real estate assets, we have strived to ensure that the Commonwealth is a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. I am pleased to see that these same principles represent the foundation of our long-range Master Plan for the Seat of Government.

As provided in § 2.2-1138 of the Code of Virginia, I approve the update of the long-range Master Plan for the Seat of Government. The update was developed as provided in Chapter 887 of the 2002 Acts of Assembly (Appropriations Act), by the Department of General Services and its consultant, Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC.

The plan not only supports economic revitalization efforts, but also shows particular regard for the historic nature of these buildings. The adaptive reuse of the Old State Library, as well as the restoration and renovation of the Virginia State Capitol and the Finance and Washington Buildings, all currently underway, underscore my commitments.

Further, I endorse the emphasis on open space preservation and pedestrian safety, as well as making the most efficient and cost-effective use of state-owned assets. These elements provide flexibility in meeting the space needs of the Commonwealth in the future. I encourage you to continue development of similar long-range plans for other state-owned and leased properties in the Metro Richmond area.

Sincerely,
A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'MR Warner'.

Mark R. Warner



VIRGINIA STATE CAPITOL MASTER PLAN





FOREWORD

Located in downtown Richmond, the capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Capitol Square is one of the few large, public, open green spaces. The historic State Capitol building, designed by Thomas Jefferson, stands on a hill overlooking the Square. The interior renovation of the Capitol, slated to begin in April 2005, will require the State Legislature to relocate temporarily to the newly renovated Old State Library and Archives Building. The Legislature will return to the Capitol building in late 2006.

As emphasized in the master plan, a significant investment over the next 10 years is recommended for the entire Capitol Square complex, which encompasses Capitol Square and the adjacent buildings. As one of the first public parks in the nation, Capitol Square is historic, and integral to planning for the complex. Based on extensive data assembled by the Department of General Services and the consultant team, space needs have been calculated, and many agencies occupying leased space are programmed to relocate to the Capitol Square complex. A combination of renovation and new construction will create a pedestrian friendly environment in and around Capitol Square, increasing the potential to attract tourists and to boost both the local and state economies.

Individual construction projects will fit into a framework that provides more open space and increased security for the Capitol grounds. The ground floors of new buildings will provide diverse uses that ensure activity throughout the week, including weekends. Visitors will be able to experience the historic Capitol through a new visitor center currently under construction. Vehicular traffic and parking will be located primarily outside the historic grounds, and the area surrounding Capitol Square will be dedicated to accommodating pedestrians.

The Governor, through coordination of the Director of the Department of General Services, House Appropriations Committee, Senate Finance Committee, and Capitol Outlay Sub-Committee, will be responsible for implementation of the master plan. Many of the early action recommendations have already been approved.

The authors recommend that an annual review of the plan be performed to ensure that development follows the guidelines contained in this report. With careful monitoring, the functionality of this important area can be enhanced and the Capitol Square complex will continue to serve as the symbol of democracy and a distinctive component of Virginia's heritage.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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WRT would like to thank the members of the Virginia State Capitol Master Plan Advisory Committee whose guidance and feedback helped shape this document.

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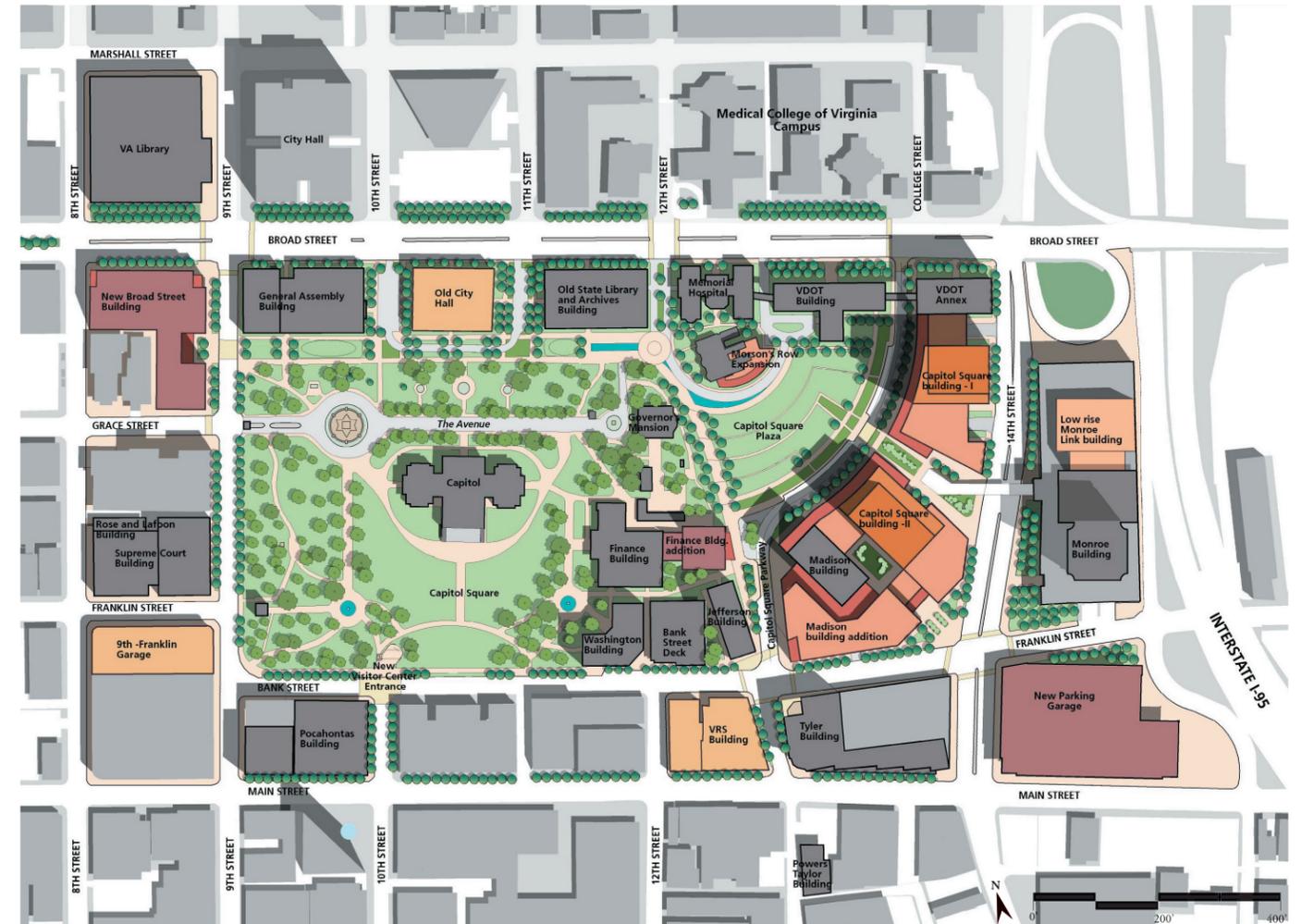
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- A. Environmental Communications Report (Cloud Gehshan Associates)
- B. Tunnel Condition Report (Robert Silman Associates)
- C. Richmond Office Areas Market Overview (Economics Research Associates)
- D. Security Review (System Planning Corporation)

Note: Appendix is not part of this document. It is included in a separate report.



VIRGINIA STATE CAPITOL MASTER PLAN





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Virginia State Capitol Master Plan focuses on developing a long-range (10-year) program for the growth of state agencies within the Capitol Square complex, the space allocation of that program, and an urban design framework to guide future construction. The consultant team led by Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC included specialists in master planning, historic preservation, space programming, security, engineering, and economic development—the disciplines required to respond to the two objectives of the master plan study:

1. Maximize utilization of Commonwealth of Virginia office space in downtown Richmond and define the necessary improvements in the environment to achieve maximum utilization.
2. Contribute to the City of Richmond and broaden the Commonwealth's efforts to revitalize downtown, promote tourism, and preserve historic treasures.

Existing and Future Space Need

Future space need in the Capitol Square complex is based on 1) the internal growth of existing Capitol Square agencies, and 2) relocation of other agencies identified as high- and moderate-priority for moving into the Capitol Square complex from downtown and metro locations over the next 10 years.

The total existing area occupied by agencies determined to be high- and moderate-priority for location in the Capitol Square complex is 2.17 million net assignable square feet (NASF), of which 1.33 million NASF is already located within the Capitol Square

complex. The remaining 844,151 NASF is in downtown and metro locations outside the complex.

Based on the projected growth of all agencies identified as high- and moderate-priority for relocation to the Capitol Square complex, the total space need in the next 10 years is somewhere between 868,525 and 1.21 million NASF, depending on whether a standard of 210 or 250 NASF per FTE staff is used. New, more efficient buildings would use the 210 NASF/FTE standard. Existing buildings would be reconfigured to the 250 NASF/FTE standard. Although less efficient than the standard for new buildings, 250 NASF per FTE is still lower than the existing average area per staff. It is important to note, the projected space need does not include existing Capitol Square agencies that were not part of the master plan scope.

The Department of General Services (DGS) selected the space allocation option that utilizes the full potential of the Capitol Square complex. This calls for new construction of 1.02 million NASF. Half of this new building space is provided by the proposed new Broad Street building (460,000 NASF) and the Finance Building addition (40,000 NASF), currently under construction. The remaining 520,000 NASF is provided by new buildings along the proposed Capitol Square Parkway and by the small Monroe link addition next to the existing Monroe Building.

The Program Needs Summary Report, revised July 2004, includes a space need analysis to determine the future space need of all agencies, both in the Capitol Square complex and throughout the Richmond metropolitan region. Over 127 agencies occupying a total of more than 5 million NASF of office space were surveyed to assess their existing and future space needs. An on-line survey tool as well as manual completion

of the survey form was used to gather and expedite the compilation of data. To further clarify the surveys, over 30 agencies were interviewed as part of the assessment. Future space needs were assessed based on staff projections and the space planning standards previously discussed.

Using the survey results and an evaluation of agency functions, the consultant team identified priority candidate agencies that could move to the Capitol Square complex within the next 10 years.

Existing Condition of Capitol Square Buildings

The consultant team documented existing space use and reviewed previous plans and reports for all 25 buildings in the Capitol Square complex and for other state government buildings in downtown Richmond. DGS was responsible for building condition assessment of all the Capitol Square complex buildings. Most of these buildings are more than 50 years old. The compilation of data from a building evaluation survey focusing on mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection (MEP) systems indicated the degree of need for equipment replacement due to age and obsolescence based on environmental standards. Existing Capitol Square buildings generally demonstrate a substantially high space-to-staff ratio (greater than 250 NASF/FTE staff).

Based on the existing building condition assessment, existing and future space need, and space availability, the consultant team evaluated suitability of the space for existing and future occupants and recommended prioritized renovations for the next 10 years in order to achieve maximum utilization. This formed the foundation for developing the space program options.



Space Program Options

The space program options exercise addressed the maximum space utilization objective from the standpoint of agency functions and requirements. High, medium, and low space-utilization scenarios were developed for the next 5 and 10 years. High Capitol Square space utilization was selected as the preferred option with a proposed total new space of 1.02 million NASE. Selection was based on factors such as comparison of life-cycle costs of owning versus leasing, consolidation of multiple agency locations to realize greater operational efficiencies, and co-location of agency functions to increase effective performance of their duties.

Master Plan Elements

The master plan process also included separate focused studies on related elements including tourism potential, security, parking, and signage for the Capitol Square complex. The recommendations of these studies are reflected in the master plan urban design framework.

The tourism study included a market analysis and tourism strategy; transportation, parking, and local real estate information; and the wayfinding aspects of tourism. The findings of the Tourism Potential Report (April 2004) indicate a steady decline of visitors to the Capitol building since 9/11/2001, although the number of visitors is still high (approximately 100,000 visits in 2002). DGS is building an underground Bank Street visitor entrance to the Capitol that also serves as a new visitor center with at least 10,000 square feet of space. This will be adequate to serve the potential increase in tourism and will provide easy access to parking and a cohesive visitor information system.

The security study of the Capitol Square complex found no *verified* threats to the Capitol or Capitol Square complex and only a few suspected or potential threats. The

increased security environment for the State Capitol, however, warrants consideration of a higher-than-average threat level compared to commercial entities. Considering the overall assumed threat for Capitol facilities to be low, the security report outlines appropriate measures. With potential threats such as large-scale car or truck bombs, additional measures are recommended for the area, particularly steps to restrict vehicular traffic in and around the Capitol buildings.

A detailed parking assessment of the Capitol Square area indicated a net existing shortfall of approximately 500 parking spaces based on the current goal of providing parking for 80 percent of the state employees. It is expected that further development in downtown Richmond would provide additional significant constraints on parking in the absence of any major investment in improving mass transit service. There are opportunities for parking in the vicinity of the Capitol Square complex that also would provide an alternative way of reducing vehicular congestion, particularly at 14th and Broad streets (I-95 interchange). Because of the impact of additional development, the master plan assumes a reduced goal of providing parking for 71 percent of the state employees.

Urban Design Framework

A review of previous master plans and studies found a variety of design proposals developed over time to improve the Capitol Square environment, particularly the northeast quadrant. Since no single scheme was ever implemented fully and only fragments were built, the area lacks an overall unity and order. The closing of Governor Street to vehicular traffic, due to security concerns for the Governor's Mansion, and the future requirement for new office space provide opportunities to restructure the northeast quadrant.

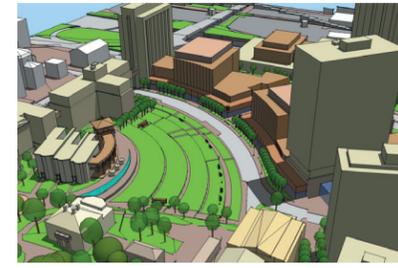
A set of design principles emphasizing open space, building organization, and a pedestrian friendly Capitol Square campus were translated into an urban design framework reflecting the maximum space program scenario. Two key elements are a major new open space—Capital Square Plaza—and a new street joining Broad and Bank streets—Capitol Square Parkway—which together establish a structure to accommodate new development and improve the existing pedestrian environment.

The urban design framework also addresses the existing traffic congestion on Broad and 14th streets and the existing site constraints of topography. Two new underground parking garages below the new buildings with entrances on 14th and Bank streets and the potential for an underground parking garage below Capitol Square Plaza provide parking for approximately 70 percent of the state employees. Parking opportunities in the vicinity of the Capitol Square complex as well as mass transit incentives for state employees are recommended to relieve the parking pressure.



The urban design framework accommodates existing as well as new buildings. Various visitor attractions and amenities are proposed for the ground-floor level of buildings facing either the new Capital Square Plaza or the historic Capitol Square. New building heights respect and preserve historic vistas, such as the viewshed between the Capitol and Church Hill area.

Rooted in an understanding of the site's history, past planning efforts, and current programmatic needs, the master plan will guide development of the Capitol Square complex in both the short and long term. The master plan maximizes space within the complex, allowing for consolidation and greater agency efficiency. The urban design framework gives much-needed order to the northeast quadrant of the site and creates a major new open space helping to integrate the entire complex. The addition of a visitor center, restaurants, and other ground-floor commercial uses combined with a vastly improved pedestrian environment will serve the growing office population and attract visitors, thus contributing to the vitality of downtown Richmond and to the promotion of tourism in the historic Capitol Square area.





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