

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

PARTNERSHIP FOR SMARTER GROWTH

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Partners,

I am thrilled to take the reins as the new President of the Board for the Partnership for Smarter Growth (PSG). I can't believe it has been twenty years since I began my career in affordable housing and urbanism in a basement office of a row house in Dupont Circle. Oh, how times have changed!

These are truly exciting and challenging times for land development, transportation and equity in the Richmond region. New people continue to move here to enjoy our fabulous culture, history, natural beauty, and quality of life. Here at PSG, we welcome growth and change. However, we demand that it be done with a focus on racial and economic equity, environmental sustainability, and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access so that the fruits of change can be shared with all residents of the region. We are excited to educate the new Board of Supervisors in both Henrico and Chesterfield Counties, and to help shape the platforms of Richmond City Council candidates in the coming year.

Just as the region changes, so does PSG. We have had the pleasure of incorporating three new board members (Barry, LaToya, and Doug - you should meet them because they are brilliant and inspiring) who are helping us to grow as an organization in new and exciting ways. Also, we have new foundation partners who are helping us respond to the most pressing challenges. Our staff team of Amy Guzulaitis and Jordyn Taylor have been the engine and backbone to drive this work forward.

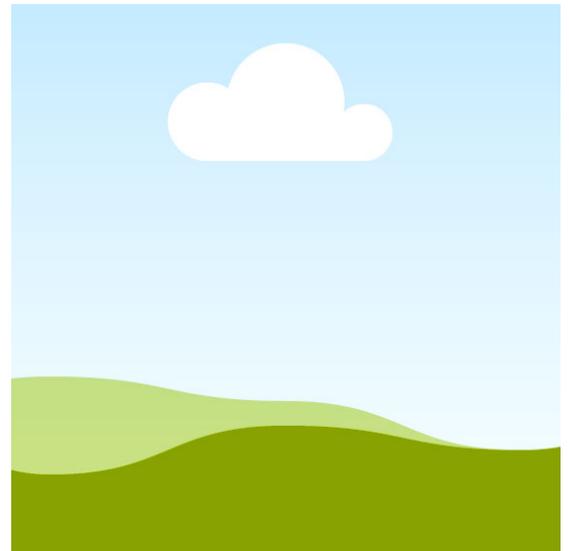
PSG plays a unique and indispensable role in the Richmond region. We are one of the only organizations able to speak to the specific intersection of land use, housing, transportation, equity and environmental stewardship at the local level.

We value your partnership. We hope you will continue to donate to support our work or become a new donor. Please join us.

Stephen Wade, President

OUR MISSION

The Partnership for Smarter Growth advocates for a sustainable and equitable future for the Richmond region by promoting transit-oriented communities that are safe, walkable, and bike-friendly.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

AT PSG, WE BELIEVE WE WORK BETTER TOGETHER. THIS YEAR WE'VE PRIORITIZED WORKING WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS TO ENHANCE THE WORK WE DO. SOME OF OUR PARTNERS FROM THIS PAST YEAR INCLUDE:



Henrico Conservation Action Network (HCAN) a community-led group advocating for a sustainable, climate-friendly future for Henrico.



RVA Rapid Transit promoting better and more frequent transit in the Richmond region, as well as giving input on future bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors



Virginia Interfaith Power and Light working for equitable, inclusive transportation options for people of all backgrounds, especially on arterial roads.



Route 5 Corridor Coalition advocating for sustainable, smart land use along the historic Route 5 corridor



Bikewalk RVA promoting safe and connected places for people to be able to walk and bike



Coalition for Hanover's Future working towards a sustainable, vibrant future that honors its rural roots in Hanover County



Virginia Conservation Network creating coalitions and coordinating the state's conservation movement

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK IN 2023

Transportation

In addition to our work advocating for better transit, in 2023 PSG participated in the Virginia Walkability Action Institute, hosted by the Virginia Department of Health and Equitable Cities. As part of this program, we came up with a plan to highlight the dangerous arterial roads in the Richmond region and how they affect pedestrians and cyclists trying to use the roads. We wanted to showcase the dangers of many of these arterial roads by highlighting Chamberlayne Ave as an example and then showing how similar road conditions are seen throughout the region. Teaming up with Virginia Interfaith Power and Light, we split our project into 3 sections:

CHAMBERLAYNE AVE WALK AUDIT

In August, our team physically walked Chamberlayne Ave from Brookland Park Blvd to Mitchell St to take into account the current conditions of the road for pedestrians and people on bikes.



CHAMBERLAYNE AVE PEDESTRIAN PSA VIDEO

During our walk audit, we filmed the conditions we saw in the corridor. You can see our video and full Chamberlayne Ave report online at psgrichmond.org



STORYMAP OF PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES IN THE RICHMOND REGION

To emphasize that dangerous arterial roads are a regional problem, we also created a storymap of the Richmond region overlaid with pedestrian fatalities and other data. This helps us see what factors can lead to an area being more dangerous for people walking and biking and where the highest need is.



Land Use

In 2023 we reviewed and alerted the public to a number of plans and proposals that would significantly impact land use throughout the Richmond region. Some of the plans and proposals included:

- **Shockoe Bottom Small Area Plan:** We supported the transit-oriented development and rezoning and advocated for more historic protections.
- **Hanover Comprehensive Plan:** We promoted for the plan to stop urban sprawl and preserve open and forested lands while revitalizing areas that are already developed
- **Diamond District Redevelopment:** We asked for more clarification on the process and to make it easier to include stakeholders and for transit-oriented development and affordable housing to be a key feature.
- **Removal of Parking Minimums in City of Richmond:** We helped win the removal of parking minimums in the City! Removing parking minimums can lower development costs, potentially free up land for additional homes, and lower the price of housing for residents.
- **Arcadia Development:** We fought against the Arcadia development in eastern Henrico, a historically rural part of the County. We worked with partner groups to advocate for a more sustainable plan that better fits the community.

Affordable Housing

This past year we also advocated for more affordable housing options throughout the Richmond region. Some of our advocacy included:

- **Reconnecting Jackson Ward:** We advocated for increased affordable housing policies and anti-displacement measures to be included in the plan, as well as preserving culturally significant spaces and encouraging more transit connections.
 - **Gilpin Court:** We advocated for the adoption of a Residents Bill of Rights
- **City of Richmond Affordable Housing Trust Fund & Commission:** We took a hands-on role to expand funding and to strengthen the oversight role of the AHTF.
- **Henrico County:** PSG researched the gaps of affordable rental housing for households that make 30% AMI or below and the eviction rate of Henrico
- **City Center:** We advocated for the City to set aside at a minimum percentage of 30 percent with an emphasis on lower-income units.
- **Eviction Prevention:** We encouraged the adoption of the 8-Step practice to avoid evictions (Eviction Prevention Plan by WinnCompanies)

EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

As always, PSG is committed to advocating for smarter, more sustainable development and helping to educate communities on the benefits of smart growth.

Throughout the past year, PSG has continued its unwavering dedication to advocating for smarter, more sustainable development practices. Our advocacy efforts encompass a wide range of activities, including engaging with local and regional authorities, policymakers, and other stakeholders to promote policies and initiatives that align with the principles of smart growth.

By participating in public hearings, workshops, and meetings, PSG has been a strong voice in advocating for land use regulations and zoning ordinances that prioritize efficient land utilization, transportation options, and the preservation of open spaces.

Our ongoing collaboration with government agencies and community groups has allowed PSG to advocate for initiatives such as compact, mixed-use development, and public transportation expansion. By promoting policies that encourage pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, reduce urban sprawl, and enhance public spaces, PSG has consistently worked to create communities that are more sustainable and economically vibrant throughout the Richmond region.

WALKING TOURS

In 2023 we led 3 walking tours! Our walking tours are meant to highlight current areas in the region that are slated for redevelopment or otherwise significant.

CITY CENTER TOUR

Our City Center Tour in 2023 provided participants with a unique opportunity to explore the heart of our region's urban development. PSG guided attendees through the city center, showcasing redevelopment projects.

Attendees gained valuable insights into the transformation of the cityscape, with a focus on compact, mixed-use development, walkability, and the integration of green spaces. By immersing participants in the city's evolving landscape, PSG effectively demonstrated the tangible benefits of smart growth in an urban setting.

HISTORIC STREETCAR TOUR

Partnering with RVA Rapid Transit, we took a journey through the past and discussed the founding of Richmond's streetcar line and the impacts it had on development. Attendees experienced the GRTC bus system firsthand and learned how our modern transit systems have evolved over time.



LIBBIE MILL TOUR

The Libbie Mill Tour in 2023 was an exploration of a significant development project in our region. We led attendees through the Libbie Mill development, illustrating how smart growth principles have been integrated into the project's design and implementation.

The tour showcased features such as mixed-use buildings, green spaces, and pedestrian-friendly amenities, highlighting how the development contributes to the community's well-being and vitality. This tour served as a testament to the potential of redevelopment projects in the future, such as Willow Lawn.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS & DONORS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the generous donors and steadfast supporters who have been the cornerstone of PSG's success over the past year. Your unwavering commitment to our mission of promoting smarter, more sustainable development has enabled us to make a profound impact on our communities and the environment. Your contributions, whether financial, in-kind, or through advocacy, have allowed us to continue advocating for change, educating communities, and leading transformative initiatives.

Together, we have worked to build more resilient, livable, and vibrant neighborhoods. Your belief in our cause and your dedication to creating a better future through smart growth are truly remarkable. PSG is immensely grateful for your partnership, and we look forward to continuing our shared journey toward a more sustainable and prosperous tomorrow.

Thank you for being an essential part of our mission!

