



A Social Initiative to Connect UR with RVA

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What it is

Overview: uRVA is a pilot program with the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce (ChamberRVA), the University of Richmond, Uber, and RVA businesses to connect students with the city. It consists of providing students 50% Uber codes to popular neighborhoods, recruiting businesses in those neighborhoods to offer student discounts, and marketing the program to students. This pilot program is the culmination of work done through ChamberRVA and two independent studies from the Robins School of Business and the Jepson School of Leadership Studies.

Mission: Integrate RVA into the University of Richmond campus culture by (a) showcasing RVA neighborhoods with publicity and student discounts, and (b) providing accessibility to these neighborhoods with an Uber Safe Rides program sponsored by the University of Richmond Transportation System.

Why? ChamberRVA wants to attract and maintain millennial talent after graduation by showcasing the RVA lifestyle and providing accessibility to the RVA community. In 2011, the Chamber created a summer program called YRichmond to connect the interns of RVA businesses with the region. In 2016, the Chamber expanded the initiative by approving the development of an academic-year program to connect the students of nearby universities with the region.

uRVA is the first pilot of this academic-year program, and it is designed specifically for the University of Richmond. If proven successful, the uRVA model can be used as a framework for academic-year programs in other universities in the Richmond region.

Agents Involved

University Community

- UR Transportation Department
- SPDR (student advertising club)
- Campus Media (student bloggers, campus magazines, the Collegian)
- RCSGA & WCGA (student governments)

RVA Community

- ChamberRVA
- Uber
- Participating Businesses
- Carytown Merchants Association
- Scott's Addition Boulevard Association

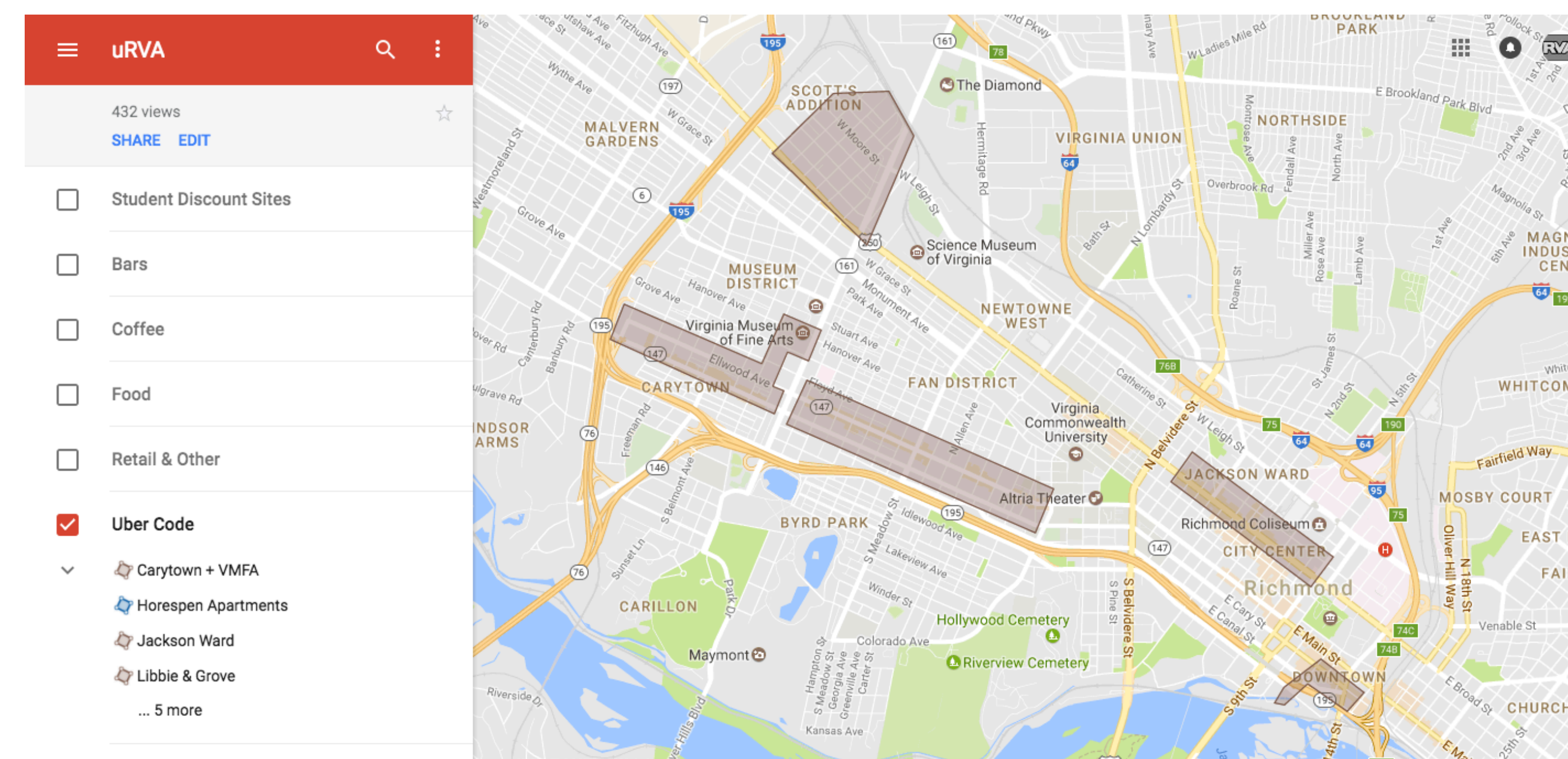
Financial Sponsors

- Chief Dave McCoy - \$10,000 for Uber partnership
- Dr. Steve Bisese - \$1,500 for marketing initiatives
- Jim Ukrop - \$1,000 for marketing initiatives

How it works

1) Search the Sites - Google Maps

Using uRVA's Google Map, anyone with a @richmond.edu email address can search through uRVA's featured neighborhoods and businesses. These neighborhoods are accessible with uRVA's 50% Uber code, and students can filter their search by the following categories: Bars, Coffee, Food, Retail & Other.



2) Travel to Destination - 50% Uber Codes

The uRVA pilot program features seven popular RVA neighborhoods with a means to view their offerings, a 50% Uber code to get there, and an array of student discounts at participating businesses. A full uRVA program, contingent on a successful pilot, will expand into other RVA neighborhoods and popular venues.

Featured Neighborhoods

- Carytown
- Scott's Addition
- Uptown
- Jackson Ward
- Shockoe Slip
- Libbie & Grove
- Short Pump

3) Get Deals - Student Discounts

Businesses in uRVA's featured neighborhoods participate in uRVA by offering discounts to UR students. In return, uRVA markets these businesses to the UR community through campus media, student bloggers, social media initiatives, and other marketing materials. Students receive the discount by showing their student ID at the register.

Business Categories

- Food
- Coffee
- Retail & Other
- Bars & Breweries

The results of uRVA's survey of UR off-campus preferences guided the types of businesses recruited to uRVA. These businesses are placed into categories to help students find what they are looking for.

Timeline

Overview: During the fall semester, Dr. Bill Bergman oversaw in an independent study with the Robins School of Business to develop the framework for uRVA. This research-intensive semester included surveying the student body, collaborating with university departments, and partnering with student organizations. During the spring semester, Dr. Thad Williamson oversaw a second independent study with the Jepson School of Leadership Studies. This semester consisted of raising funds for uRVA, recruiting businesses to join the program, collaborating with Uber, and facilitating a contract between Uber and UR.

Fall Semester 2016 (8/22/16 – 12/14/16)

- Collaborated with existing UR city-related programs to maximize the combined effort of connecting the university with the city
- Surveyed the UR student body to discover off-campus activity preferences, transportation preferences, and student perceptions of the city
- Researched RVA businesses, attractions, and activities that would appeal to the UR student body
- Developed a program framework that is compatible with existing UR city-related programs
- Began connecting with the UR student body for input by collaborating with the student governments, partnering with student clubs, and meeting with UR media outlets

Spring Semester 2017 (1/9/17 – 4/21/17)

- Received approval, support, and funding from UR on the administration level to launch uRVA
- Raised \$12,500: \$10,000 to fund an Uber partnership and \$2,500 to fund uRVA marketing initiatives
- Established relationships with the RVA business community - recruited 10 businesses to join uRVA and offer student discounts
- Partnered with a student advertising club (SPDR) and planned an effective marketing campaign to advertise uRVA to the UR community
- Prepared to launch uRVA and gather tangible data to show the UR administration and RVA business community.

What's Next

The plans are set, the funds are raised, and uRVA is scheduled to launch at the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester. Over the summer, ChamberRVA will expand the list of participating businesses, and UR will finalize a partnership with Uber. Once the pilot program launches, uRVA will continue to collect data and partner with the student advertising club, campus media, and both student governments

After analyzing the data from the pilot program, ChamberRVA and UR will decide whether or not to invest in a full version of uRVA. If proven successful, ChamberRVA may establish city outreach programs based on the uRVA model to other universities in the region.