

**Minutes:**

**Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee  
Zoom Meeting  
Richmond VA**

**Meeting:** February 16, 2023

Leighton Powell: Vice-Chair – Presiding

**Call to Order:** 12:04 PM

Attending Committee Members: Ralph Hambrick, Leighton Powell, Tricia Pearsall, John Heerwald. Community members present: Kevin Vonck, Director, Planning and Development Review, Giles Garrison, Superintendent of James River Park, City of Richmond, Josh Stutz, Executive Director-Friends of the James River Park, Shawna Shade, Office Administrator-Friends of the James River Park, Samantha Wangsgard, Chief Environmental Planner, Virginia DCR.

**Minutes:** Minutes of December 15, 2022 - Leighton Powell motion to approve, Ralph Hambrick seconded. Approved.

**Current Issues:**

- **James Riverfront Development Updates:** *Kevin Vonck, Director, Dept. of Planning & Development Review, City Of Richmond:* Development in Manchester: Kevin Vonck shared a slide presentation concerning growth in the Manchester Area adjacent to the James River. Screenshots of slides are attached in the Notes below (except for slide 10). A brief synopsis: The presentation sought to address: What, Where, When and What's to Come in Manchester. He pointed out the Richmond 300 identified nodes of potential growth in the City and access of nodes to each other, within each other and to the city, i.e. – connectivity within and outside the Manchester node. These connectors include 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and Manchester Canal. He also addressed future land use within the Manchester area as determined by existing and future zoning. This includes a 20-year vision. He stated that current zoning in the area has been parcel by parcel including special use requests. They are now trying to rewrite the zoning code in Richmond to make it also address the look and feel of the entire neighborhood. (for example, Mayo Island is currently zoned M-1 (light industrial use). This effort will be a 2-year process. He also analyzed units being built and parking requirements in the Manchester area.
- **Mayo Bridge – UDC Presentation:** (Justin Doyle-member of the UDC-had previously distributed to Falls members the slide presentation made by VDOT to the UDC concerning visions for the Mayo Bridge and Manchester Canal) Justin not present. Vonck stated that concerning the Mayo Bridge, “we have an opportunity to get this right.” This should be considered a multimodal structure rather than a traffic mover with particular emphasis on the lanes and curbs. Given the success of the T-Pott Bridge and considering pedestrian traffic between the heritage campus in Shockoe and the new possibility of Mayo Island as a park and Manchester growth, this now becomes not only a connector moving traffic but accommodating a park of people as well. Vonck sees it as a new Potterfield. The first item on the Mayo Bridge agenda will be the Manchester Canal completion and then planning stages for the Mayo Bridge. The Mayo Bridge Plans come before the Planning Commission 2.21.23 (see notes) Regarding what's next for the Mayo Bridge, first will be the conception phase. There will be ample time and forums for public participation. It was suggested that we contact VDOT for a presentation to the Falls Advisory Committee in March 2023.
- **CRLC Updates:** Parker Agelasto - not present but Josh Stutz indicated that negotiations were going well and Friends of the James River Park stood ready to help with grants and funding when appropriate and needed.
- **Historic Tredegar Hill Amphitheater & Brown's Island Improvement Plan:** Alex Dahm was not present and Kevin Vonck knew little about the Amphitheater plans. Venture Richmond has sent out a survey concerning public input regarding Brown's Island. Vonck indicated that there were plans to reconfigure the connection to the Potterfield Bridge and that Dominion Energy plans to expand their footprint on Brown's Island (substation) as they may be replacing or reconfiguring the substation. (See Planning Commission Notes below)

- **Virginia Scenic Rivers:** Samantha Wangsgard – Samantha reported that she is still in charge of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program for DCR. She also met with James Vonesh, associate professor and assistant director of the Center for Environmental Studies at VCU and his graduate students to forge an MOU of partnership between VCU's River Studies and Leadership Certificate Program and DCR for their program presentation at the Rivers Management Symposium in San Antonio, Texas on February 28, 2023.
- **Scenic Virginia:**
  - Leighton Powell –Lynn Crump led a group in Rappahannock County on identifying and valuing scenic resources. This was a prototype workshop before rolling out a more established program for valuing scenic views and viewsheds.
  - Leighton also reported that Rick Barton, a rivers advocate in Tazewell, VA, has established a network committee helping to identify and further Scenic Rivers which will be meeting in late Spring.
- **JRA Update:** Justin Doyle was in the field in Petersburg and couldn't be present but sent this report:
  - James A. Buzzard River Education Center: Work and cleanup associated with the Gillies Creek Interceptor project should be wrapping up in March according to our friends at DPU. The James River Association and our project team are working to secure the building permit for the project. Mobilization and construction activities associated with the river education center are scheduled to begin in April or May. [Click here](#) for more information about the river education center.
  - Virginia Capital Trail Realignment: I met with Cat Anthony of the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation last week to discuss impacts to the Virginia Capital Trail during construction of the river education center. Impacts should be minimal (Monday through Friday) and will consist of vehicles crossing the trail as they enter and exit the river education center property. The James River Association and our construction team are committed to minimizing trail impacts and ensuring trail users are safe during construction. Realignment of the trail will occur by the time the river education center project is completed in 2024. My colleagues and I are actively working to secure funding to support realignment.
  - Mayo Bridge Replacement: I will extend an invitation to VDOT to present the Mayo Bridge Replacement project to the committee at our meeting in March.
  - James River Leadership Expeditions: The James River Association is accepting student and teacher applications for the 2023/24 James River Leadership Expeditions. [Click here](#) for information about the program.
- **James River Park:** Giles Garrison, Superintendent, James River Park. Giles shared 5 major programs going on in the JRP
  - The Pony Pasture parking lot is being revamped.
  - Archeology ongoing in the Pony Pasture (see Notes below)
  - Urban Rangers – one hire is being advertised
  - Portage around Boshers Dam underway as part of new River Safety initiative
  - A conceptual design for a Mayo Island Park (pro bono) is beginning, There will be ample opportunities for public engagement.
  - VDOT is also talking about putting a pedestrian beacon on Mayo Island (for crossing) as well as remediating the asphalt in the parking lot once finished.
- **DPU:** Grace LeRose (not present). Leighton reported that there is a CSO stakeholders meeting next Thursday. She will make a report next month.
- **Friends of James River Park Report:** Josh Stutz, Executive Director, Friends of the James River Park – Report:
  - New directional signage in place.
  - Purchased new equipment for park and particularly for maintenance of Floodwall walk: Morooka MST300 Carrier
  - Wood River Run – Saturday, April 15, 2023
  - Plans for improvements on Belle Isle are underway to include bathrooms.

- Purchasing a Jeep and Gator for the new Ranger in the Urban Ranger Program.
  - There will be a program soon for new Interpretation Volunteers to be ambassadors for the JRPS to assist on busy weekends and at high-trafficked venues.
  - FoJRP has purchased time on Channel 8 (WRIC) to initiate River Watch launching in April to promote River Safety. There will be 14 minutes of time throughout the days—Thursday-Sunday—dedicated to giving and explaining river levels on the James with a live river cam below the T-Pott Bridge. Hope to promote Scenic River designation as well.
  - Cost estimates are being gathered for conceptual plan for reopening 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Pumphouse.
  - An ADA ramp (at Pumphouse) is going out for bid. This is from a DCR grant.
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- **BridgePark Update:** Jim Hill – no information

**New Business:** None

**Reports:**

**JROC:** JROC work project this month is spreading gravel and cleaning at the Manchester Climbing Wall. 2.18.23

**Open discussion:** None

**Adjourn:** 1:04 pm

**Next Public Meeting: March 16, 2023**

Meetings begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Richmond City Hall and/or conducted via Zoom. Meetings are scheduled for the THIRD Thursday of each month. All meetings are open to the public. If you are not now receiving e-mail meeting notices and wish to receive them, please provide your name and e-mail address to [velzyg@verizon.net](mailto:velzyg@verizon.net). If you would like to be removed from the list, so indicate at the above e-mail address.

Tricia Pearsall – Secretary

**NOTES:**

**1. Kevin Vonck's Manchester Presentation: Screenshots of slides:**

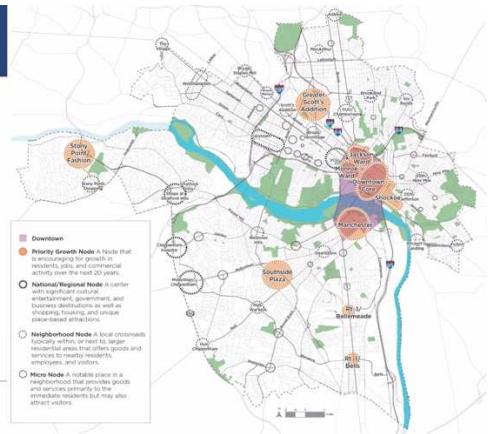


Kevin J. Vonck, Ph.D., Director

THURSDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2023

## Nodes

located at the convergence of many uses and multiple modes of transportation  
major activity centers today that should be enhanced



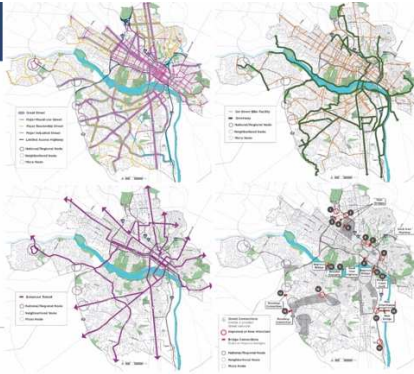
[Richmond 300 p. 25]

## Future connections

seeks equitable access to and among Nodes

implemented through:

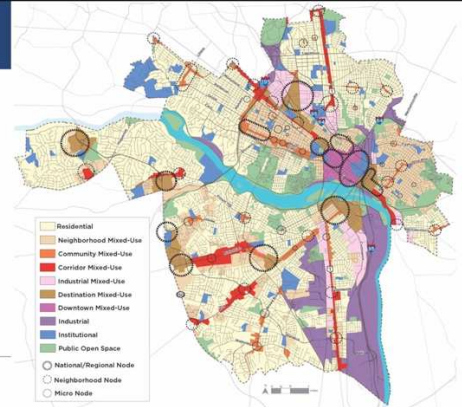
- street typologies
- Great Streets
- bike facilities
- greenways
- enhanced transit
- street grids
- bridges and interchanges



[Richmond 300 p. 73]

## Future land use

how an area should "look and feel" in the future



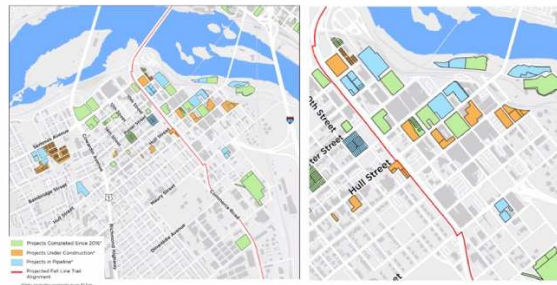
[Richmond 300 p. 53]



## Who participates in development review?

<b>PDR:</b> Land Use	<b>PDR:</b> Zoning	<b>PDR:</b> Building Plan Review
<b>DPW:</b> Urban Forestry	<b>DPW:</b> Right of Way	<b>DPW:</b> Streetlights
<b>DPU:</b> Gas Works	<b>DPU:</b> Water	<b>DPU:</b> Sanitary Sewer
<b>DPU:</b> Storm Sewer	<b>DPU:</b> Water Resources	<b>RFD</b>

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## Greater Manchester development since 2016

	EXISTING	BEING BUILT	IN THE PIPELINE	TOTAL
Projects	16	9	8	33
SUPs	2	1	2	5
PODs	10	6	6	22
Permits	4	2	0	6

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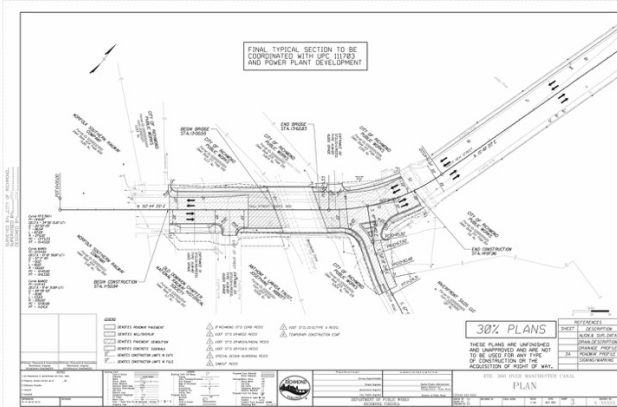
## Greater Manchester development since 2016

	EXISTING	BEING BUILT	IN THE PIPELINE	TOTAL
Units	2,348	1,072	2,043	5,463
Parking	1,675	1,007	1,641	4,323
Surface	798	29	64	891
Structured	877	978	1,577	3,432

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## 2. Planning Commission Meeting-2.21.23:

- Approval of Manchester Canal Bridge with conditions (??): Plan and Renderings below:



- Regarding Brown's Island: Recommended for Approval

**ORD. 2023-045** To close, to public use and travel, a portion of South 9th Street located just east of the Manchester Bridge and on Brown's Island, consisting of 3,936± square feet, upon certain terms and conditions.

## 3. James River Park Improvements:

Friends of James River Park website:

[February 20, 2023](#)

“RPS operations staff and trails team is currently excavating asphalt at Pony Pasture Parking lot entrance, exit, and parking area, working in zones beginning at the far side of the lot and continuing toward the entrance and exits. This is a part of the JRPS quarterly projects plan. Parks and Recreation staff is proud to complete this project in-house, and estimates that the parking lot resurfacing will be complete by the end of February 2023. Four additional handicap accessible spaces will be added to the parking area, located near the Pony Pasture kiosk. A similar resurfacing project was completed at the parking area near Pump House at Boulevard Bridge in 2017. Pony Pasture is also the site of a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) which is funded by Department of Public Utilities and has been active since 2022. As a part of this SEP, funding was made available for three initiatives: (1) invasive plant treatment in Pony Pasture and the Wetlands, (2) riparian restoration at Half Moon Beach and the mouth of Pleasant Creek in the Wetlands, (3) removal of Ash trees that present possible fall hazard. All of these projects are moving forward at Pony Pasture. Park visitors may note trees that have been recently downed along the Riverside Trail at Pony Pasture. The debris will be reduced over the next month as operations staff has capacity to mulch and disperse it. The riparian restoration projects took place on Wednesday Feb. 15 and Thursday, February 16 as a partnership between James River Park System and Wetland Studies and Solutions.

Lastly, an archeological survey initiated by the Department of Historic Resources, in partnership with archeology contractor Hurt & Proffitt, is underway in the Wetlands and Pony Pasture areas of James River Park System. The purpose of the survey is to identify all archaeological sites in areas vulnerable to flooding and storm events, and to preliminarily assess the eligibility of identified sites for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The total area to be surveyed is approximately 60 acres in the western portion of the Park, avoiding the wetland areas in the eastern portion. The archaeological survey has been conducted by a crew beginning on January 4th, 2023, over three 9-day sessions. Shovel test pits are laid out and spaced 50 feet apart running north to south across the study area. The STPs are dug manually with round shovels by archaeologists and will measure 15 inches in diameter. All soil from the STPs is screened through mesh to facilitate artifact recovery, and then used to fill the STP back in. Known roadways, trails, and native flower beds are avoided. The shoreline and other sensitive erosion areas will be surveyed by pedestrian walkover instead of STP excavation in order to prevent ground loss. All artifacts will be catalogued by archaeologists and returned to James River Park System for display. To date, there have been no major findings. The project will conclude at the end of February.