

James River Park System Master Plan

*A plan for the protection, access, and enhancement of
Richmond's premier asset*

What is the James River Park?

The 600-acre James River Park System is the Richmond region's premier public park. The Park extends from Huguenot Flatwater to Ancarrow's Landing and encompasses the scenic Falls of the James River. Seen as a unifying force for our region, the Park brings together residents of all ages, ethnicity, and socio-economic circumstance from the city and all surrounding counties.

Lauded as one of the major assets of the city for economic development, the Park provides over \$33.5 million in economic impact per year to the city as reported by a study released by researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2017. The Richmond Tourism Corporation uses the James River to attract tourists. The Chamber of Commerce uses the James River Park System to help attract young people to the workforce, and the Park has won numerous awards. Additionally, the James River is counted as one of the eight regional priorities of the Capital Regional Collaborative.

The James River Park System is owned and operated by The City of Richmond's Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Department. It is managed by a small dedicated group of nine full time employees that oversee all areas of park maintenance and cleanliness; 42 miles of single track trails and greenways and delivery of environmental and adventure recreation programming. Park staff also work closely with many supporting organizations to provide a wide variety of volunteer experiences within the park. In 2017, volunteers donated 7,042 hours to the park, creating everything from new park benches and trail bridges to general trash clean-ups and invasive species management.

The Need for a Master Plan

Today the James River Park System is seen as a crown jewel of the region. With 1.7 million visitors in 2017, and more than 2 million visitors expected in 2018, the James River Park accommodates more than any other park in the region. Continued increases in visitation, along with extremely limited options for development due to Park easements, predicate the need for a master plan. A master plan will help to maintain the quality of the experience for users, the health of the river and the wildlife; prioritize Park improvements for highest and best use for the city and region.

What is the Process for Creating a Master Plan?

The master planning process will be an inclusive one, resulting in a shared vision of what we all want our Park to be. The Friends of James River Park and the City of Richmond's Parks,

Recreation and Community Facilities Department will use this document as a road map to work with all vested individuals, public, and private organizations to **implement** this long-term community vision. The Board of Directors of Friends of the James River Park raised \$250,000 for the plan in 2018 and hired local firm VHB in partnership with Hargreaves, the firm that created Richmond's Riverfront Master plan. This plan will take into account existing conditions, previous planning documents and results from facilitated public and neighborhood meetings. The whole process will be completed by September 2019.

What Will the Master Plan Include?

The master plan will span 10 years and will include recommendations for trails and greenway connectivity, river-based activities, multi-modal transportation access, natural resources protection, accessibility, cultural and historical resources, park buildings, infrastructure, and concept plans for underutilized infrastructure within the park.

Friends of the James River Park and supporting organizations believe this master plan is an essential tool needed to protect one of the region's most valuable assets, maintain the quality of the user experience and the natural environment, and provide access for all.

Who Supports the Development of a Master Plan for the James River Park?

The Board of the Friends of the James River Park* is dedicated to the development of this plan and continued stewardship of its long-term implementation. The plan is also supported by the James Scenic River Advisory Committee, James River Association (JRA), RVAMORE, James River Outdoor Coalition (JROC), James River Advisory Council (JRAC), James River Hikers, James River Work Group of the Capital Region Collaborative, Sportsbackers, and the City of Richmond's Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Department.

Who is Funding the Master Plan? Members of the Friends of the James River Park, The Community Foundation of Richmond, NewMarket, Venture Richmond, Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation, CoStar, Beirne Carter Foundation, Mary Ann and Lou Wilson, and The Richmond Health District.

***Who is The Friends of the James River Park?** FOJRP is a 501(c)3 that takes a leadership role in strategy, advocacy, communication, marketing, education and stewardship for the James River Park System. This organization is coordinating the effort to develop and implement the Park Master Plan.

Anyone can support the James River Park by becoming a member of the Friends of the James River Park at any level and completing a Master Plan Survey at jamesriverpark.org.