

Poems on the James River Branch Trail

A pilot for connecting the Fall Line Trail to other Poetry on the Trail projects across Virginia

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Vision

A small-scale, seasonal installation of poetry that highlights the artists who live/work/study along the James River Branch Trail/Southside corridor... as well as its cultural, historical, and natural landscapes. Poems will be solicited by submission and displayed via QR code affixed to either existing or de novo infrastructure.

(Advances the MAP's 7th pillar of “a city that tells its stories,” especially in light of how little focus there has been on public art pertaining to—and housed in—Southside.)

Location & Trail Overview

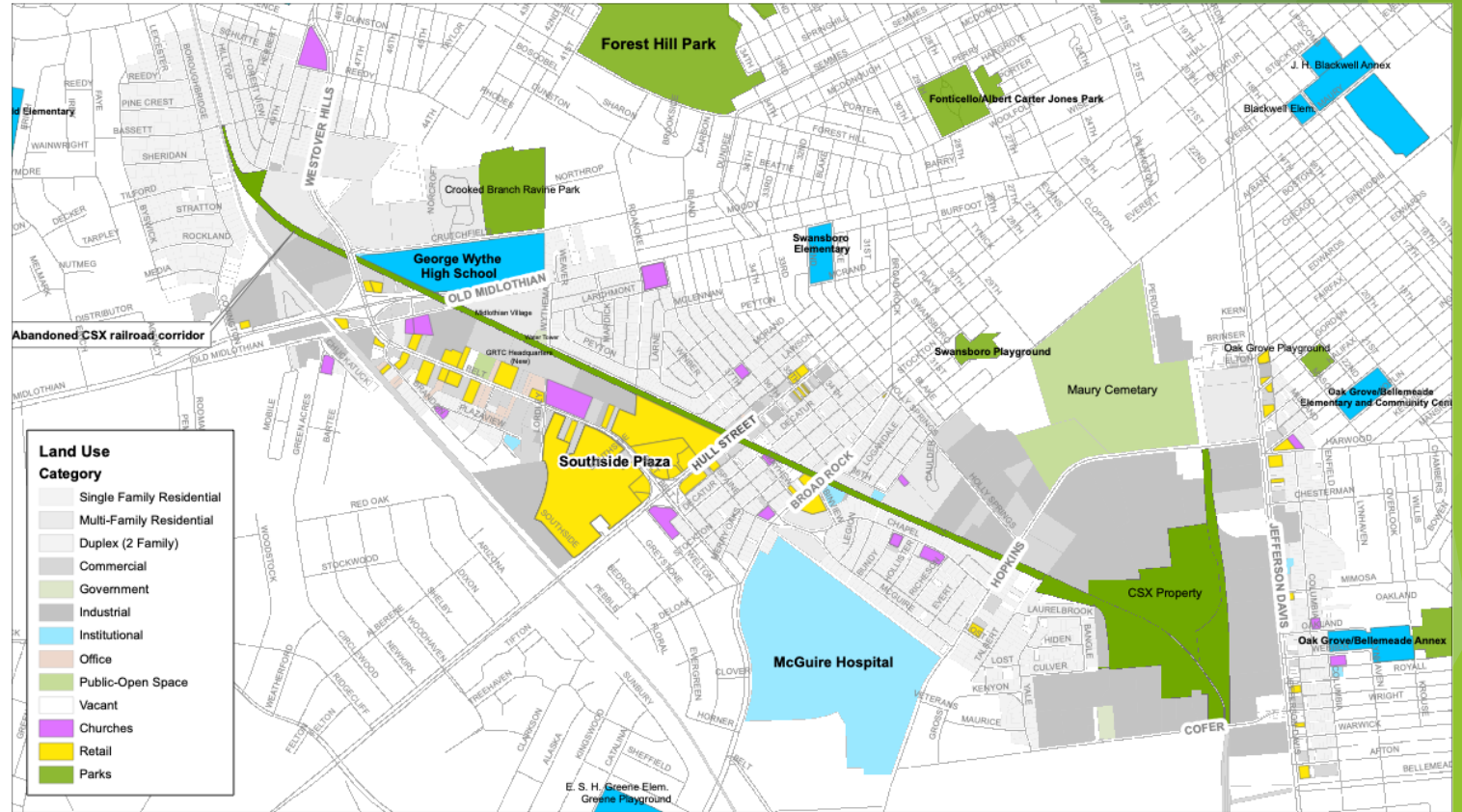
JRBT is a ~2-mile paved trail extending from Westover Hills Blvd to Hopkins Road

Provides a car-free alternative mode of travel across Southside including heavily trafficked corridors

Includes spurs that connect to several communities as well as commercial centers

Scheduled to be completed in December 2026

A blank canvas for public art!



Southside Rail Trail Orientation and Planning Map

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 0.6 Miles





Content

QR codes printed on aluminum placards or weather-resistant stickers will lead the trail user to a website hosting individual poems where they can potentially

- Read the poem
- Listen to the poem read by the poet
- Discover something about the poet
- Discover something about the specific region (flora, fauna, historic or cultural landmarks) where the QR has been placed, and which is tied in turn to the poem



Content, continued

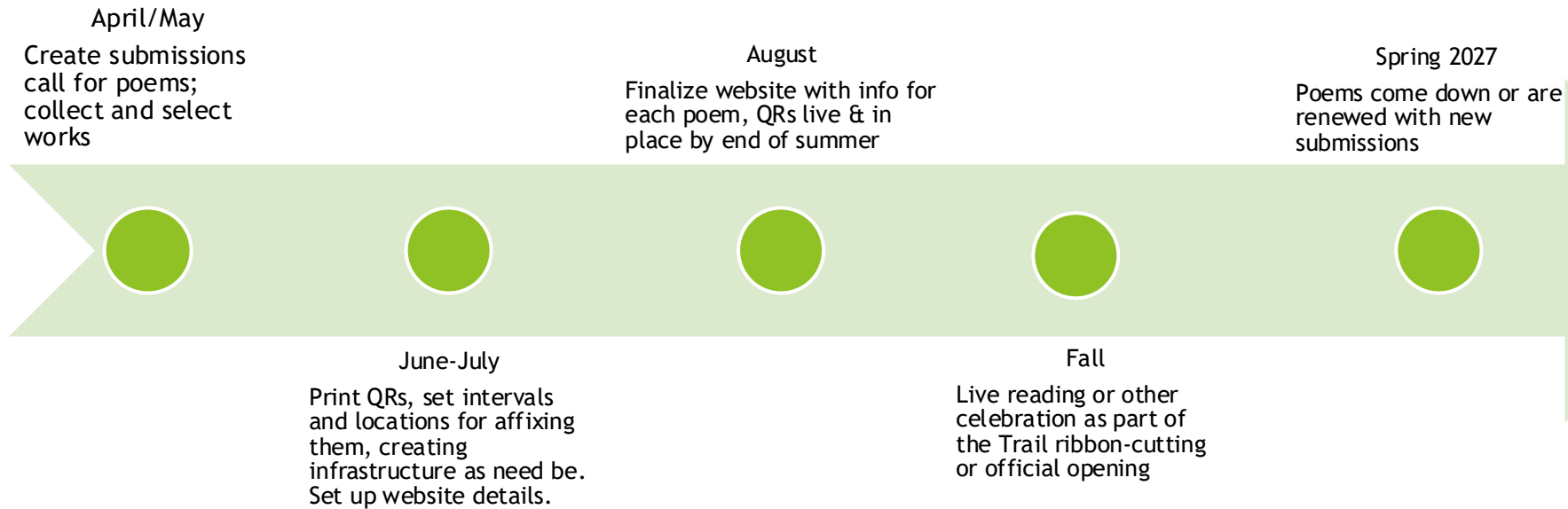
QR codes can be affixed at/near road crossings, trailheads, or benches—moments where trail users will naturally pause

QR codes may be affixed to extant benches, signage posts or other trail infrastructure, OR may have separate designated fixtures

Goal: Non-permanent, graffiti-resistant design using sustainable materials



Timeline



Budget: Considerations

Weather-resistant stickers or aluminum sheet metal

Dynamic QR code subscription service

Honoraria for poets

Website hosting, if necessary

De novo infrastructure to affix QRs, if necessary

Budget: Estimates



\$250/ print 10 QR codes on aluminum



~\$75 yearly QR subscription



\$75/ per poet honorarium

Budget: Sources

- ▶ Initial outlay for this limited-scope pilot program to be covered by Poet Laureate Project funding
- ▶ Sequential “rounds” of QR generation and/or expansion of the project to a wider section of trail require additional funding with possible sources including
 - The People’s Budget
 - CultureWorks
 - Poetry Society of Virginia

Partnerships

Poetry on the Trail

James River Park System

Poetry Society of Virginia

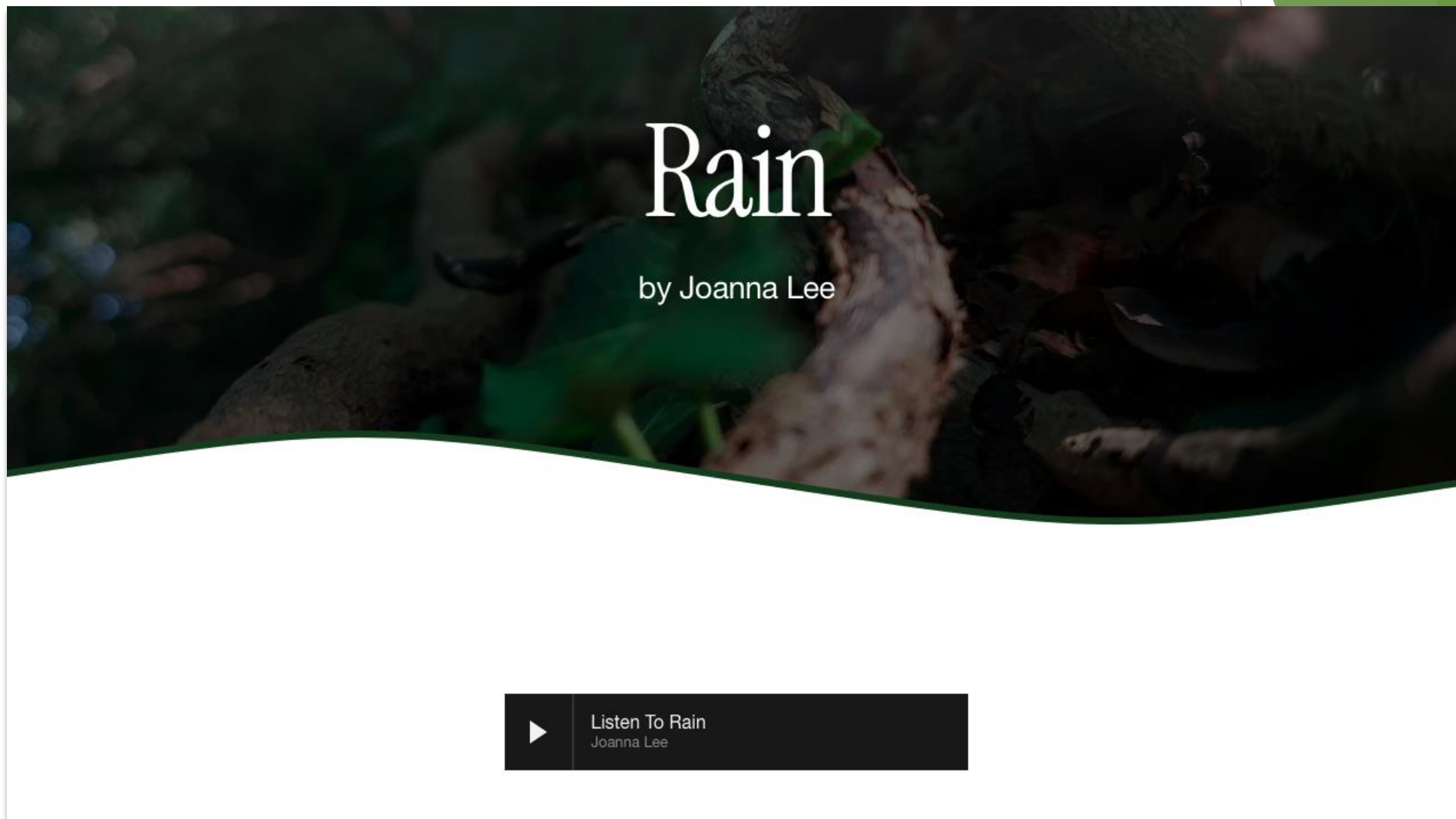
References



Dahlgren Heritage Railroad Trail



Example: Rain



Elizabeth River Trail



The Elizabeth River Trail

“The Elizabeth River Trail (ERT) is a 10.5-mile multi-use path with 11 sections from Norfolk State University to Norfolk International Terminals following the Elizabeth River. The ERT connects trail users to area attractions, cultural and historic sites, and anchor institutions, and is within a five-minute walk of 28 neighborhoods. Through free and open-to-the-public programming throughout the year, the trail offers something for everyone.”

Summary

This project would:

- Give added cultural & artistic value to a newly public landscape using an existing template
- Determine the feasibility of a larger scale poetry-based public arts project in this region
- Highlight the stories of a historically underrepresented locality and population

Click to read more about...

- ▶ Poetryonthetrail.org
- ▶ [James River Branch Rail-Trail Concept Plan A Vision for Southside Richmond](#)