

INTRODUCED: September 28, 2020

AN ORDINANCE No. 2020-219

To designate the City-owned properties known as 201 Hioaks Road, 315 Beaufont Hills Drive, 620 Rosemont Road, 2100 Colby Lane, 2606 Lynhaven Avenue, and 2903 Rear Ernest Road as public parks to be known by the names of Hioaks Park, Reedy Creek Wetland Park, Rosemont Road Park, Broad Rock Creek Park, and Ernest Road Park.

Patrons – Mayor Stoney, Mr. Jones, and Ms. Trammell

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: NOV 9 2020 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, the City owns certain properties located at 201 Hioaks Road, 315 Beaufont Hills Drive, 620 Rosemont Road, 2100 Colby Lane, 2606 Lynhaven Avenue, and 2903 Rear Ernest Road; and

WHEREAS, section 8-12 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2015), as amended, provides for the designation of the use of City-owned real estate by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the City of Richmond that the City Council officially designate such property as City parks;

AYES: 8 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: NOV 9 2020 REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That, pursuant to section 2.03(b) of the Charter of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and section 8-12 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2015), as amended, the City-owned properties located at 201 Hioaks Road, 315 Beaufont Hills Drive, 620 Rosemont Road, 2100 Colby Lane, 2606 Lynhaven Avenue, and 2903 Rear Ernest Road, and identified by Tax Parcel Nos. C005-0879/024, C005-0992/011, C006-0659/036, S008-0276/004, S008-0418/002, and S009-0417/036, respectively, in the 2020 records of the City Assessor, as listed on the document entitled “Parcels to be added as Public Parks,” a copy of which is attached to and made a part of this ordinance, are hereby designated as City parks and incorporated into the City’s park system for use as open-space land.

§ 2. That, notwithstanding any provision of sections 8-7 through 8-10 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2015), as amended, to the contrary, the parks established pursuant to section 1 of this ordinance shall be named as follows:

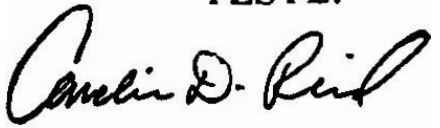
- (a) 201 Hioaks Road, Tax Parcel No. C005-0879/024, shall be named Hioaks Park.
- (b) 315 Beaufont Hills Drive, Tax Parcel No. C005-0992/011, shall be named Reedy Creek Wetland Park.
- (c) 620 Rosemont Road, Tax Parcel No. C006-0659/036, shall be named Rosemont Road Park.
- (d) 2100 Colby Lane, Tax Parcel No. S008-0276/004, shall be named Broad Rock Creek Park.
- (e) 2606 Lynhaven Avenue, Tax Parcel No. S008-0418/002, shall be named Broad Rock Creek Park.

(f) 2903 Rear Ernest Road, Tax Parcel No. S009-0417/036, shall be named Ernest Road Park.

§ 3. This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.

A TRUE COPY:

TESTE:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carlin D. Reed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

City Clerk



CITY OF RICHMOND

INTRACITY CORRESPONDENCE

O&R REQUEST

DATE: August 21, 2020 **EDITION:** 1

TO: The Honorable Members of City Council

THROUGH: The Honorable Levar M. Stoney, Mayor 

THROUGH: Lenora G. Reid, Acting Chief Administrative Officer 

THROUGH: Reginald E. Gordon, DCAO for Human Services 

FROM: Christopher E. Frelke, Director of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities 

RE: To designate the City of Richmond-owned properties along Drake Street and Lynhaven Ave, 200 Hioaks Rd, Ernest Rd and Caldwell Ave, Beaufont Hills Drive and Lamar Drive, and 620 Rosemont Rd as public parks under the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities

ORD. OR RES. No. _____

PURPOSE: To declare that a public necessity exists and to authorize the Chief Administrative Officer or the designee thereof, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to initiate the designation of property from the Department of Public Utilities, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Economic and Community Development described in detail in the attached document, "Parcels to be added as Public Parks," as parks for purpose of maintaining such property as public green space.

Tax Map Parcel Identification Numbers: S0080418002, S0080276004, C0050879024, S0090417036, C0050992011, C0060659036

REASON: A public necessity exists to designate these properties as public parks to increase the number of Richmond residents who live within a ten minute walk to a public open space. This designation will add 36.3 acres of public green space.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval is recommended by the City Administration.

BACKGROUND: As part of the search for continuous opportunities to expand existing park properties and provide for enhanced public use, the City, at times, transfers properties between departments. On January 9th, 2020 Mayor Levar Stoney convened a team of public servants and nonprofit professionals to work toward the goal of all Richmonders having access to a park or

open space within a 10-minute walk from their homes – an initiative announced in his 2020 State of the City Address. He advised and guided the group that this goal should be met through a lens of social and racial equity. On February 27th, 2020 the group convened for a two- hour work session, reviewed presentations from three experts, and split into Land Identification and Policy working groups.

The Land Identification group, co-chaired by Brienne Mullen (DPU – Sustainability) and Jeremy Hoffman (Science Museum of Virginia) set out developing and refining a ranking process for all city-owned properties that fell outside of the Trust for Public Land 10-minute walkshed. This group convened five times, agreed on selection criteria and rankings, and ranked the top city owned properties that could be transferred to Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities for the development of green/open space. This work took place between February and July of 2020. The initial reports and methodology are attached, as is documentation regarding each parcel to be designated a park.

FISCAL IMPACT / COST: None

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: No new impacts

BUDGET AMENDMENT NECESSARY: None

REVENUE TO CITY: None

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon adoption

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: September 14, 2020

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: September 28, 2020

REQUESTED AGENDA: Consent

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Land Use, Housing & Transportation

CONSIDERATION BY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES: None

AFFECTED AGENCIES: PRCF, DPU, DPW, ECD

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.: None

REQUIRED CHANGES TO WORK PROGRAM(S): None

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment A – Parcels to be added as Public Parks
Attachment B – Mayor’s ‘Green Team’ Land Identification Initial Report
Attachment C – Mayor’s ‘Green Team’ Policy Working Group Initial Report

O&R Request

Page 3 of 3

STAFF: Ryan Rinn, Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities 646-4347
Christopher Frelke, Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities 646-1128

Parcels to be added as Public Parks
8/24/20
City of Richmond
Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities

Overview

The Land Identification Working Group of the Mayor’s Green Team developed an objective, data-driven, racial equity-informed process for identifying city-owned properties that would increase access to open and green space in the City of Richmond in line with the Trust for Public Land’s 10-minute walk initiative. The following five properties have been identified as the initial focus of this expansion of open and green space.

Total City-Owned Acreage: 36.3

Parcels to be added:

1. Broad Rock Creek Park: S0080418002, S0080276004
2. Hioaks Park: C0050879024
3. Ernest Road Park: S0090417036
4. Reedy Creek Wetland Park: C0050992011
5. Rosemont Road Park : C0060659036

Objective Rank	Name	Address (Approximate)	Council District
1	Broad Rock Creek - ECD + PRCF	Drake Street and Lynhaven Avenue/Colby Lane	8
2	Hioaks Water Tower - DPU	200 Hioaks Road	9
3	Rear Ernest Road - PRCF	Ernest Road and Caldwell Avenue	8
4	Reedy Creek Wetland - DPW	Beaufont Hills Drive and Lamar Drive	9
5	Rosemont Road - PRCF	620 Rosemont Road	8

Below, maps of each parcel and brief descriptions of them are included.

Brief Description of Top 5 Properties

Broad Rock Creek Parcels: These two parcels, one PRCF one ECD, are located in South Richmond south of Bellemeade Road and East of Route 1. The two parcels together total 17.6 acres. Broad Rock Creek runs through the center of the site and much of the land is overgrown with invasive species (mainly kudzu). There are no current structures on the site and it is most easily accessed from Lynhaven Drive and Colby Ln. Much of the site is bordered on the east by a CSX rail line.



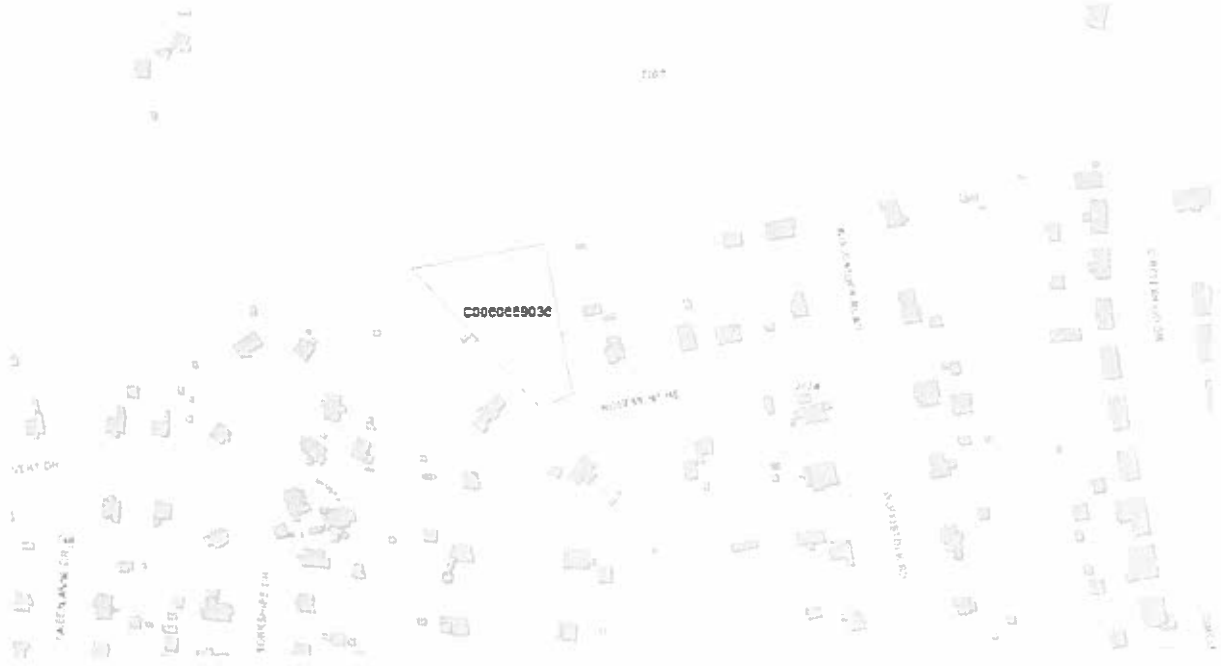
Hioaks Water Tower: This DPU parcel is located at the terminus of Hioaks Rd in South Richmond just east of Chippenham Parkway and south of Carnation Street. This parcel includes a large water tower fenced on all sides at its center. Approximately 2.7 of the 4.1 acres of the property are wooded and available for public access at a safe distance from the water tower. DPU and PRCF should jointly survey the property to establish public access boundaries. Additionally, an adjacent, undeveloped 12.2 acre parcel could be pursued for a large park/open space footprint in the future.



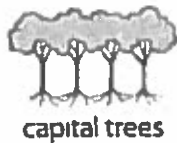
Rear Ernest Rd: This undeveloped PRCF parcel is located in South Richmond north of Walmsley Boulevard and west of Castlewood Rd behind a residential development. This 2 acre parcel is bounded on the west by a CSX rail line and adjacent to other city owned parcels on the other side of the CSX tracks.



Rosemont Rd: This PRCF parcel is located in south Richmond at the bend in Rosemont Rd north of Warwick Rd and south of Midlothian Turnpike. This approximately 1 acre parcel is in a residential community and backs up to small ravine adjacent to more than 8 acres of linear open space under Dominion Energy Power Lines, an adjacent 20 acre privately owned parcel is also completely undeveloped.



City of Richmond
Mayor's Green Team
Land Identification Group Initial Report
May 2020



Background

On January 9, 2020, Mayor Levar Stoney convened a team of public servants and nonprofit professionals to work toward the goal of all Richmonders having access to a park or open space within a 10-minute walk from their homes. He advised and guided the group that this goal should be met through a lens of social and racial equity. On February 27, 2020, the group convened for a two-hour work session, reviewed presentations from three experts, and split into Land Identification and Policy working groups.

The Land Identification group, co-chaired by Brianne Mullen (City of Richmond Office of Sustainability) and Jeremy Hoffman (Science Museum of Virginia) set out developing and refining a ranking process for all city-owned properties that fell outside of the Trust for Public Land 10-minute walkshed. This group convened five times, agreed on selection criteria and rankings, and ranked the top 12 city-owned properties that could be transferred to the Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities (PRCF) for the development of green/open space. This work took place between February and May 2020.

Recommendations

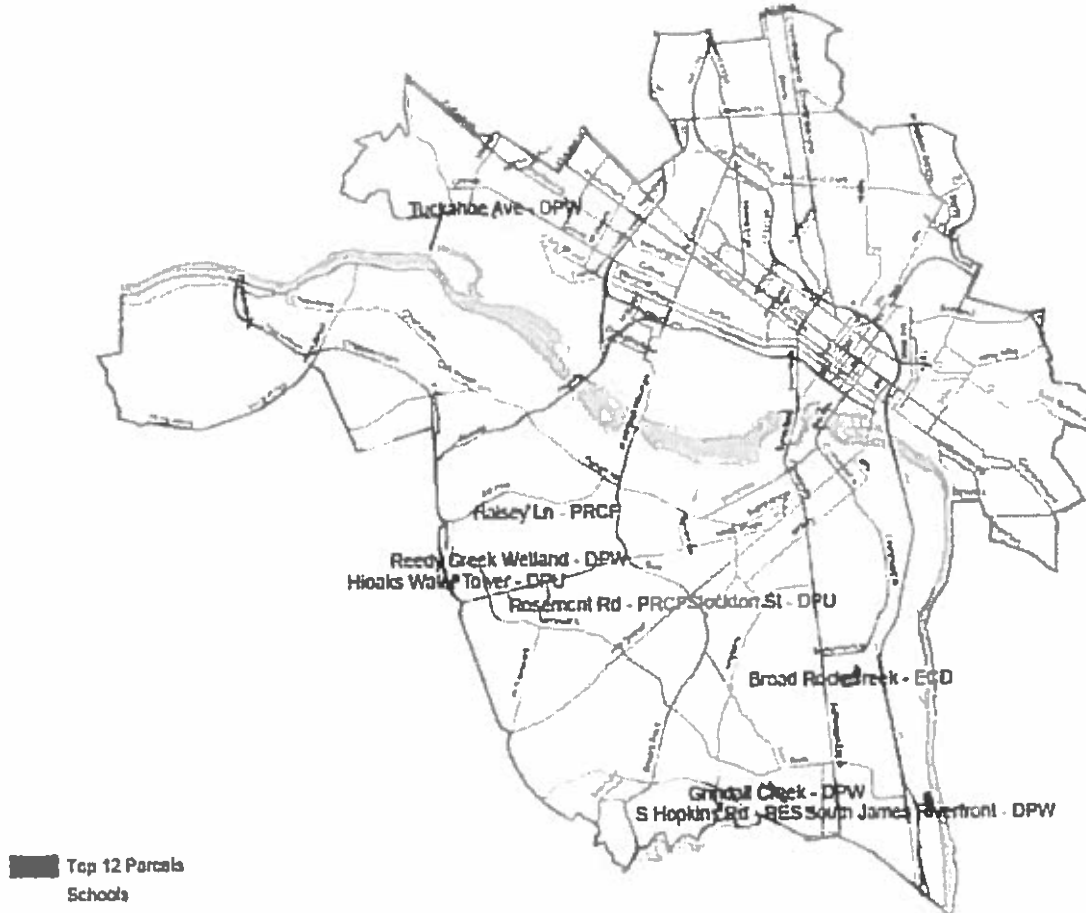
1. Conduct additional evaluation of the Top 12 Parcels (identified below) to determine the best candidates for new public green spaces as COVID-19 pandemic physical distancing guidelines and technical capacity allow. This evaluation should include:
 - a. Working with the surrounding community of each parcel to assess needs and possible uses for public green space while considering other benefits of green infrastructure and conservation or restoration of natural resources;
 - b. Assessing walkability through in-person visits and technical analysis; and,
 - c. Gathering current and projected future demographic information for the new people served, including race, ethnicity, age, and income. This will provide a more equitable foundation for the qualitative evaluation of each parcel.
2. Work with Richmond Public Schools (RPS) through the Policy working group to allow school grounds to be designated as public green spaces, as appropriate.
3. Explore additional options for increasing public green/open space focused on network connectivity, private and tax delinquent properties, and properties/land owners adjacent to city properties for potential park expansion through the vehicles of tax credits, conservation easements, and potential donations.

3. Heat exposure from the Science Museum of Virginia 2017 Urban Heat Island Assessment 3-4 PM surface temperature
4. Size of parcel in square footage
5. Number of new people served according to the Trust for Public Land Park Evaluator tool
(note: this factor was not used in the final analysis due to data accuracy issues¹)

The initial analysis revealed that there were several groups of parcels next to each other, so those were grouped for the analysis, bringing the number of parcels from 33 to 21. In addition, the group decided that nine of the parcels which are on school properties should be considered separately as candidates from the others, as they are often already used as informal community green spaces when not in use as school space. The group initially evaluated several school properties as being among the highest priority parcels, such as Huguenot High School. The Policy team is currently reviewing various agreements between RPS and nonprofits to assist in crafting blanket language that could inform a citywide memorandum of understanding between PRCF and RPS. This resulted in a total of 12 parcels to be considered in the objective ranking. See Appendix B for the ranking with all factors considered, and Appendix C for a more detailed methodology breakdown.

Objective Rank	Name	Address (Approximate)	Council District
1	Broad Rock Creek - ECD + PRCF	Drake Street and Lynhaven Avenue/Colby Lane	8
2	Hioaks Water Tower - DPU	200 Hioaks Road	9
3	Rear Ernest Road - PRCF	Ernest Road and Caldwell Avenue	8
4	Reedy Creek Welland - DPW	Beaufont Hills Drive and Lamar Drive	9
5	South James Riverfront - DPW	4400 Deepwater Terminal Road	8
6	Rosemont Road - PRCF	620 Rosemont Road	8
7	Stockton Street - DPU	3901 Stockton Street	8
8	Grindall Creek - DPW	4203 Angus Road	8
9	Glenway Drive Open Space - PRCF	6033 Glenway Drive	9
10	Halsey Lane - PRCF	1001 Halsey Lane	4
11	Tuckahoe Avenue - DPW	"Triangle Park"	1
12	South Hopkins Road - RES	4025 Hopkins Road	8

¹ The group identified several data accuracy issues as potential parcel locations were explored with the Trust for Public Land's ParkServe tool. The main output of the tool - the number of new people served by a parcel - was not quantifiable at several of the locations, as they were inaccurately already labeled in the tool as parks or existed within a 10-minute walkshed of inaccurately labeled parks. In addition, demographic breakdowns of the data by age, income, race, and ethnicity often did not equal the total number of people served.



Due to the inaccuracies of the data from the Trust for Public Land Park Evaluator tool, the group was unable to include information on the number of new people that would be served by each of these parcels into this analysis. The group recommends that additional analysis be done using demographic data and GIS to incorporate into the ranking:

- Total number of new people within a 10-minute walk of a park for each of these parcels.
- Current and projected future demographic information for the new people served, including race, ethnicity, age, and income. This will provide a more equitable foundation for the qualitative evaluation of each parcel.

Steps 2 and 3: In-person evaluation and community visioning

The COVID-19 global pandemic hit the Richmond region while the Land Identification group was conducting this work. This limited the group's ability to meet in person, visit parcels, and engage the community in the evaluation process. The group recommends that these steps be taken when it is safe to do so, working alongside the community engagement efforts of RVAgreen 2050 and the Richmond 300 Master Plan process to receive public input regarding these recommendations. Using the ongoing community organizing power of civic organizations and

nonprofits will ensure that community voice will be heard. Some of the organizations that should be included in Southside Richmond, where many of the identified parcels are located, are Southside Releaf, Fonticello Food Forest, Friends of Swansboro Park, Hull Street Action, Happily Natural Day, and Sacred Heart Center. In addition, many individuals have been longtime neighborhood representatives and are aware of ongoing organizing efforts of Southside Richmond and should be consulted, including Sheri Shannon, Natalie Draper, and Robert "Mr. Bob" Argabright. Others to be included are neighborhood civic associations such as the Bellemeade Neighborhood Association. This is not an exclusive list and only a recommendation of potential groups that can provide input to the City of Richmond about making access to green and open spaces more equitable.

Additional considerations for increasing public green/open space

Ongoing work beyond steps outlined above will be focused on network connectivity, private and tax delinquent properties, and properties/land owners adjacent to city properties for potential park expansion through the vehicles of tax credits, conservation easements, and potential donations.

Through public/private partnerships, the City can increase the percentage of public land available to its residents by adding acreage to existing parks or by establishing new open spaces in underserved areas. Entering into a memorandum of understanding with private land trusts such as Capital Region Land Conservancy can leverage grant funding opportunities to purchase land as well as receive potential gifts of land that can partially compensate landowners through the Virginia Land Preservation Tax Credit program. Acquisition strategies through these mechanisms, which require perpetual conservation easements be placed on the land, can reduce capital costs for the City and help increase the percentage of public land available in the city to be closer to the national average of 14% (according to the Trust for Public Lands). For example, if coordinated together, there are opportunities to increase the acreage of the above priority parcels including Hioaks Water Tower, South James Riverfront, Rosemont Road, and Grindall Creek. Additional opportunities exist to increase the acreage of the James River Park System, or Reedy Creek, through such partnerships.

Appendix A: RVAgreen 2050 Climate Equity Index Factors

Factors – Sensitivity to Climate Change Impacts		Data Source
1	Below poverty level	Census - 2012-16 ACS
2	65+ years	Census - 2012-16 ACS
3	Under 18	Census - 2012-16 ACS
4	Disabilities	Census - 2009-13 ACS
5	Obesity	CDC
6	Adult asthma	CDC
7	COPD	CDC
8	Coronary heart disease	CDC
9	High blood pressure	CDC
10	Kidney disease	CDC
11	Poor Mental Health (self-assessed)	CDC
12	Poor Physical Health (self-assessed)	CDC
13	Grandparent responsible for own grandchildren under 18 years	Census - 2012-16 ACS
14	Work outdoors	Census - 2012-16 ACS
15	Non-white	Census - 2012-16 ACS
16	Single parent households	Census - 2013-17 ACS
17	Multi-unit structures (10 or more)	Census - 2012-16 ACS
18	Mobile homes	Census - 2012-16 ACS
19	Crowding (more people than rooms)	Census - 2012-16 ACS
20	Crime	Richmond Police Department
21	Female population	Census - 2012-16 ACS
22	Diabetes	CDC

Factors – Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change Impacts		Data Source
1	Below poverty level	Census - 2012-16 ACS
2	No HS diploma	Census - 2012-16 ACS
3	Limited English	Census - 2012-16 ACS
4	65+ years living alone	Census - 2012-16 ACS
5	Unemployment	Census - 2012-16 ACS
6	No vehicle access	Census - 2012-16 ACS
7	Renters	Census - 2012-16 ACS
8	Uninsured	Census - 2012-16 ACS
9	No central AC	City of Richmond Assessor
10	Health Opportunity Index	Virginia Department of Health
11	Housing Choice Vouchers %	HUD
12	Emergency and transitional shelters (with sleeping facilities) for people experiencing homelessness	Census 2010
13	Group homes intended for adults; Residential treatment centers for adults	Census 2010
14	Food access	USDA
15	Internet Access	Census - 2013-17 ACS
16	SNAP/food stamps	Census - 2012-16 ACS
17	Public assistance income	Census - 2012-16 ACS
18	Housing costs 30% or more of income	Census - 2012-16 ACS

Appendix B: Parcels with Objective Ranking Data

Rank	Name	Address (Approximate)	Council District	Census Tract	Climate Equity Index Classification	3-4 PM Surface Temperature (Celsius)	% Households w/o Vehicle Access	Size (sq. ft.)
1	Broad Rock Creek - ECD + PRCF	Drake Street and Lynhaven Avenue or Colby Lane	8	608	8	35.00	24.93%	938,647
2	Hloaks Water Tower - DPU	200 Hloaks Road	9	710.01	6	35.58	19.74%	182,081
3	Rear Ernest Road - PRCF	Ernest Road and Caldwell Avenue	8	609	7	35.29	20.39%	87,120
4	Reedy Creek Welland - DPW	Beaufort Hills Drive and Lamar Drive	9	710.01	6	35.32	19.74%	332,363
5	South James Riverfront - DPW	4400 Deepwater Terminal Road	8	608	8	34.25	24.93%	625,725
6	Rosemont Road - PRCF	620 Rosemont Road	8	706.01	7	35.05	19.62%	40,859
7	Stockton Street - DPU	3901 Stockton Street	8	706.02	7	35.28	10.04%	23,522
8	Ginndall Creek - DPW	4203 Angus Road	8	709	6	34.74	11.27%	772,989
9	Glenway Drive Open Space - PRCF	6033 Glenway Drive	9	710.02	6	35.09	13.18%	70,323
10	Halsey Lane - PRCF	1001 Halsey Lane	4	710.02	6	34.81	13.18%	45,500
11	Tuckahoe Avenue - DPW	"Triangle Park"	1	504	2	35.30	2.88%	6,658
12	South Hopkins Road - RES	4025 Hopkins Road	8	708.02	5	33.89	3.57%	170,991
N/A	Summer Hill Elementary - RPS	2717 Alexander Avenue	8	608	8	35.26	24.93%	199,505
N/A	Linwood Holton Elementary - RPS	1600 West Laburnum Avenue	3	104.01	4	35.14	23.92%	568,280
N/A	Huguenot High School - RPS	7945 Forest Hill Avenue	4	703	4	34.50	7.23%	2,519,073
N/A	GH Reid Elementary - RPS	1301 Whitehead Road	9	707	6	34.70	11.90%	1,166,537
N/A	Boushall Middle School - RPS	3400 Hopkins Road	8	708.02	5	35.56	3.57%	771,448
N/A	Thomas Jefferson High School - RPS	4100 West Grace Street	1	501	4	35.34	11.31%	402,930
N/A	JL Francis Elementary - RPS	5146 Sneed Road	9	708.01	6	34.41	9.08%	714,384
N/A	Southampton Elementary - RPS	3333 Cheeverly Road	4	704	3	34.57	5.36%	748,796
N/A	Fisher Elementary - RPS	3701 Garden Road	4	701	3	34.63	1.21%	432,551

Appendix C: Objective Ranking Methodology Breakdown

The four objective ranking factors were combined using z-scores, a measurement used in statistics of a value's relationship to the mean (average) of a group of values, measured in terms of standard deviations from the mean. Z-scores may be positive or negative, with a positive value indicating the score is above the mean and a negative score indicating it is below the mean.

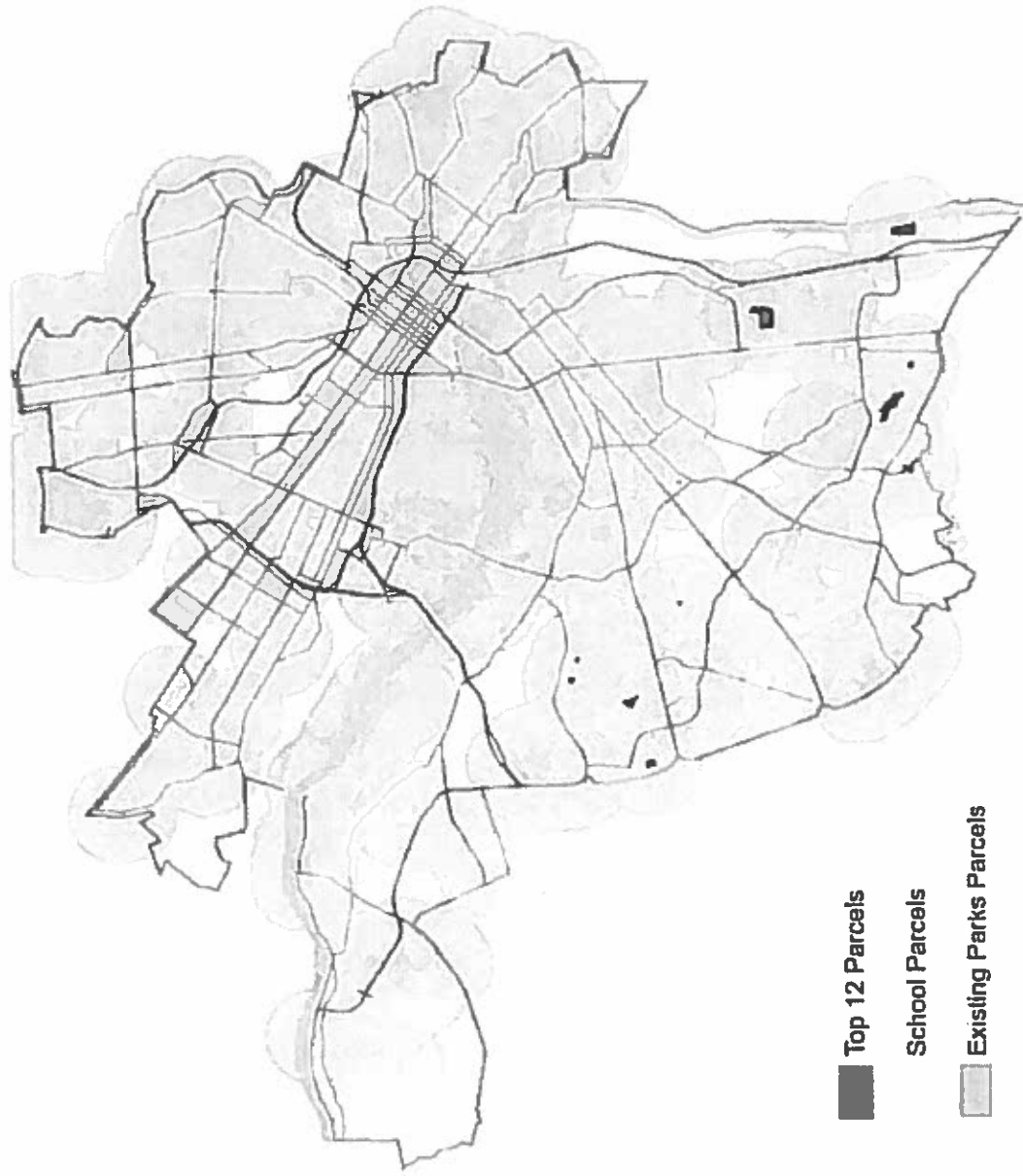
Z-scores were calculated for each ranking factor individually:

- Surface temperature: higher z-scores indicate higher temperatures
- Climate Equity Index: higher z-scores indicate higher vulnerability to the impacts of climate change for the census tract that the parcel is located in
- Size: higher z-scores indicate larger parcel size
- Vehicle access: higher z-scores indicate more households without access to a vehicle for the census tract that the parcel is located in

These individual factor z-scores were summed across each parcel. A higher z-score sum indicates a better candidate for a new green/open space based on the objective ranking factors.

Rank	Name	Surface Temp.	Temp. Z Score	Climate Equity Index	CEI - Z Score	Size (sq. ft.)	Size - Z Score	% Households w/o Vehicle Access	Vehicle Access - Z Score	Z Score Sum
1	Broad Rock Creek - ECD + PRCF	35.00	0.15	8	1.45	938,646.64	0.76	24.93%	1.48	3.83
2	Hooks Water Tower - DPU	35.58	1.46	6	0.26	182,080.80	-0.60	19.74%	0.81	1.93
3	Rear Ernest Road - PRCF	35.29	0.79	7	0.85	87,120.00	-0.77	20.39%	0.89	1.77
4	Reedy Creek Wetland - DPW	35.32	0.88	6	0.26	332,362.80	-0.33	19.74%	0.81	1.62
5	South James Riverfront - DPW	34.25	-1.56	8	1.45	625,725.00	0.20	24.93%	1.48	1.56
6	Rosamond Road - PRCF	35.05	0.25	7	0.85	40,859.28	-0.85	19.62%	0.80	1.05
7	Stockton Street - DPU	35.28	0.78	7	0.85	23,522.00	-0.88	10.04%	-0.44	0.31
8	Grindall Creek - DPW	34.74	-0.45	6	0.26	772,999.02	0.46	11.27%	-0.28	-0.01
9	Glenway Drive Open Space - PRCF	35.09	0.34	6	0.26	70,323.00	-0.80	13.18%	-0.03	-0.24
10	Halsey Lane - PRCF	34.81	-0.30	6	0.26	45,500.00	-0.84	13.18%	-0.03	-0.92
11	Tuckahoe Avenue - DPW	35.30	0.82	2	-2.13	6,658.00	-0.91	2.88%	-1.35	-3.57
12	South Hopkins Road - RES	33.89	-2.40	5	-0.34	170,991.13	-0.62	3.57%	-1.27	-4.62

Top 12 parcels labeled by objective rank (green) with school parcels considered in analysis (yellow) and existing Parks parcels (purple) – with ½ mile (10 min. walk) buffers



Additional Resources

Richmond Green Infrastructure Assessment (2011)

The report provides a "greenprint" for the city's future development and can be used by agencies and citizens alike. City staff can work with property owners to show them options for how to develop their parcels in ways that maximize green opportunities. The City's Department of Parks and Recreation can use the map to determine where to acquire future parkland or to make new trail connections. The Department of Public Works can use the report to strategically target tree planting to areas most in need. Neighborhood groups can target areas of their communities for tree planting, community gardens and other activities that can absorb and filter water. Businesses can use the maps to locate closer to green areas or to find parcels that they can develop as greener sites by adding more trees, vegetation and other features that cool the city while reducing runoff.

A Green Print Pilot Program for Richmond (2010)

The Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (RRPDC) joined with the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) and E2 Inc. and the Capital Region Land Conservancy to identify the city's existing assets with City staff.

**City of Richmond, Virginia
Mayor Levar Stoney's Green Team
Policy Working Group Initial Report**

July 2020



I. Introduction

On December 5, 2019, Mayor Levar Stoney issued a proclamation in support of the City of Richmond, Virginia joining the Biophilic Cities Network, a global network of cities working collectively to pursue the vision of a natureful city within their unique and diverse environments and cultures. Following the issuance of this proclamation, Mayor Stoney convened a team of public servants and nonprofit professionals at City Hall to work toward the goal of ensuring all Richmonders reside within a ten-minute walk of a park or greenspace on January 9, 2020. He advised the team that this goal should be met through a lens of social and racial equity. On February 27, 2020, the Green Team convened for a work session at the Byrd Park Roundhouse. During the work session, the team reviewed presentations from experts and split into Land Identification and Policy working groups.

Chairs of the Policy Working Group, Nissa Dean of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (the Alliance), Frazier Armstrong of Capital Trees, and Daniel Klein of Richmond's Green City Commission, convened members of the working group, including Justin Doyle of the James River Association, Maritza Pechin of the Department of Planning and Development Review, and Ryan Rinn of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, on a biweekly basis from March 2020 until June 2020. The working group assessed state and local government legislation and policies and consulted with members of the Land Identification Working Group in an effort to identify barriers to creating new parks and greenspaces within the City of Richmond.

This report was written in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations contained in it are intended to proliferate quality parks and greenspaces across Richmond to ensure all residents reside within a ten-minute walk of a park or greenspace at a time when Richmonders need access to parks and greenspaces. Recommendations include pursuing policy changes, adopting new policies, fostering interdepartmental cooperation within City Hall, and securing funding for the creation of parks and greenspaces.

II. Summary of Policy Working Group Findings

According to the Trust for Public Land, 22% of Richmond residents live beyond a 10-minute walk to at least one of the city's 164 parks.¹ Furthermore, Richmond's parks make up only 6% of Richmond's land area while the national median is 15%. A 2016 study conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University's Center of Society and Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation determined the average life expectancy of residents of Richmond's Northside, Southside, and East End neighborhoods is shorter (63 to 68 years) than the average life expectancy of residents residing in Richmond's

¹ Trust for Public Land. <https://www.tpl.org/city/richmond-virginia>

West End neighborhoods (78 to 83). Furthermore, among African American and Hispanic populations in these neighborhoods, increased presence of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, Type II diabetes are all documented. "More green space and parks encourage outdoor physical activity, reducing obesity and preventing associated chronic diseases, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, Type II diabetes, arthritis, and certain kinds of cancer."² Race and income play roles in determining the quality and size of parks and greenspaces individuals have access to in the United States. Affluent White municipalities tend to have access to higher quality park systems with more acreage than those with larger low-income and Latino or Black populations.³ With this in mind, members of the Policy Working Group began investigating barriers to creating parks and greenspaces in areas of the City of Richmond in which access is poor.

Existing Plans and Policies

Members of the Policy Working Group first sought to gain a better understanding of existing plans and policies relevant to the creation of parks and greenspaces in the City of Richmond. This understanding serves as the foundation on which the recommendations contained in this report are made. Adopted plans including the Downtown Master Plan (2009), Richmond Riverfront Plan (2012), and James River Park System Master Plan (2020) provide guidance for the creation of parks and greenspaces but a city-wide parks master plan does not exist. Currently, existing parks are renovated and improved individually as they receive support through the Capital Improvement Program budget. The planning process for Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth, the update to the City of Richmond's master plan, was well underway when Mayor Stoney created the Green Team. Richmond 300 presents great potential to guide future creation of parks and greenspaces across the City of Richmond. Richmond 300 identifies 6 Big Moves to advance the vision of the Plan and one of the 6 Big Moves is "Provide Greenways and Parks for All." The Richmond 300 Plan includes many strategies throughout the document that seek to expand access to green space. Working Groups with over 200 community members helped develop the strategies in the Plan. These

² [1] The Engaging Richmond Team VCU *Health Equity In Richmond, VA*.
<https://societyhealth.vcu.edu/media/society-health/pdf/RVAHealthEquityFINAL.pdf>

[1] EPA Green Infrastructure. *Benefits of Green Infrastructure*. <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/benefits-green-infrastructure>
Accessed June 14, 2018

³ Alessandro Rigolon et al, *Inequities in the Quality of Urban Park Systems: An Environmental Justice Investigation of Cities in the United States*, 178 *Landscape & Urb. Plan.* 156 (2018), https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/ja/2018/ja_2018_jennings_003.pdf

Richmond's Department of Public Utilities (DPU) released the RVA Clean Water Plan in 2017, which outlines priorities and strategies for improving water quality in three priority watersheds: Gillies Creek, Shockoe Creek, and Manchester Canal. This plan emphasizes the importance of green infrastructure, innovative stormwater management, and engagement of the public to share responsibility; with one of the goals being to "Implement land conservation and restoration practices and incorporate them into planning activities". To this end, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is partnered with DPU and RVAH2O to develop a green infrastructure master plan and prioritization and ranking tool to help the city and partners best plan appropriate placement of green infrastructure with the greatest community and water quality benefits possible. This plan and tool will be an invaluable resource as parks are planned within these watersheds.

An essential component of green infrastructure, public green space, and climate resiliency is Richmond's Urban Tree Canopy. Richmond 300 includes specific tree canopy targets including a city-wide tree canopy goal of 60% with a minimum of 30% tree canopy in all neighborhoods, prioritizing areas with a high heat vulnerability index rating and low tree canopy coverage. An overarching Urban Forest Master Plan is a strong tool for laying out the steps necessary to achieve those UTC targets through robust public engagement, equity-centered neighborhood prioritization, and modern urban forestry practices. The common challenge with urban forests is the unique impact trees have on almost every city department. A Tree Management Plan would serve to update the city's 28-year-old tree policy while providing uniform guidance to all departments on the species selection, planting best practices, and ongoing care of trees within Richmond's urban setting.

Interdepartmental Cooperation

Fostering interdepartmental cooperation around the creation and management of parks and greenspaces on city-owned parcels is a critical first step in ensuring success of this initiative, as well as many others. This effort has the potential to unlock new places for residents to recreate. Richmond Public Schools and other publicly owned parcels of land not currently managed by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities present great potential to formally create parks and green spaces in areas of Richmond with poor access. In fact, the Land Identification Working Group identified 33 initial city-owned parcels that could be used as parks and greenspaces in underserved areas of the city. Richmond's Chapel Island, located near Great Shiplock Park in the City's East End, is an example of a publicly owned space owned by the Department of Public Utilities and managed by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities to provide public use. The Policy Working Group was unable to locate an existing interdepartmental use and maintenance agreement for Chapel Island or other

parcels owned by one city department and managed by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities, such as Williams Island, 14th Street Takeout, and Lord Delaware's Island on the James River. An existing agreement between Richmond Public Schools and the Enrichmond Foundation that allows Enrichmond's TreeLab program to occupy space on school grounds to operate a plant nursery at Amelia Street School is a possible model for future agreements.⁴

Lack of green infrastructure warehouse

Guidelines for plant species and maintenance (UDC guidelines), guidelines for landscaping decisions that departments refer to (approved/not improved species)

Sources of Funding for the Creation of Parks and Greenspaces

Richmond's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (PRCF) and the spaces they improve and manage are largely funded by the City of Richmond's annual budget, which includes its Capital Improvement Program. Nonprofit organizations and foundations contribute funding to parks and green spaces across the city to supplement funding provided by the local government. Often "Friends of" and civic groups assist in organizing volunteer efforts toward ongoing maintenance, invasive species removal, trash clean up, and installation of amenities such as benches and trash cans. Ongoing general maintenance at the cities existing parks is a challenge due to a lack of consistent funding. Members of the Policy Working Group explored the use of proffers, impact fees, and bond referendums as tools to fund the creation of parks and greenspaces in Richmond.

- **Proffers and Impact Fees**

Creating parks and greenspaces as part of development and redevelopment projects through the use of tools available to local governments, such as proffers and impact fees, is a strategy for ensuring all residents of the City of Richmond have less than a ten-minute walk to parks and greenspaces. Members of the Policy Working Group determined the City of Richmond does not employ the use of proffers or impact fees to fund the creation of parks and greenspaces. Other local governments in the Commonwealth of Virginia employ the use of proffers and impact fees to fund the creation of parks and associated facilities. State enabling legislation restricts Richmond's ability to fund the creation of parks, open space, and recreation areas and related facilities through the use of impact fees. Removing this restriction through the introduction of legislation at the 2021 General Assembly session should be considered.

⁴ Memorandum of Understanding - Enrichmond Foundation's TreeLab program and the Amelia Street School

- **Bond Referendums**

Bond referendums were considered by the Policy Working Group as a means to fund the creation of parks and greenspaces in the City of Richmond. A bond referendum, similar to the one supported by Henrico County voters in 2016, is a strategy for funding creation of parks and greenspaces.⁵ In Henrico County, a recreation and parks referendum question was placed on the November 8, 2016 general election ballot pursuant to the Public Finance Act of 1991 to finance the construction, renovation, remodeling, furnishing, and equipping of recreation and park facilities, and the acquisition of land necessary for such facilities. The referendum passed and provided \$87.1 million to nine recreation and parks projects in the county.

III. Policy Recommendations

1. Interdepartmental Cooperation and Coordination

- a. Formalize interdepartmental agreements to allow public use of city-owned parcels of land.
 - i. Require (Direct?) the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities to work with Richmond Public Schools to allow public use of school grounds as recommended by the Land Identification Working Group.
 - ii. Require the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities to execute interdepartmental agreements with departments such as the Department of Public Utilities and Department of Public Works to allow public use of city-owned parcels of land.
 - iii. Adopt policy to authorize transfer of tax delinquent property to PDR or Parks.

- b. Require that all relevant departments (DPW, DPU, PRCF, RPL, RPS, PDR) to participate in internal RVAH2O meetings to collaborate, share information, such as the RVA Green 2050 Climate Equity Index, about proposed and current projects on public lands to ensure projects are designed using green infrastructure principles and practices.
 - i. Review areas of overlapping responsibilities or projects in other departments such as the Office of Sustainability, Green City Commission, RVAH2O, and DPU for areas to collaborate and eliminate redundancy.

⁵ Henrico County 2016 Bond Referendum

- ii. Require that all city departments use the green infrastructure project prioritization and ranking tool for all projects on public lands in Clean Water Plan priority watersheds to ensure the City's water quality goals are achieved.
 - 1. Establish city-wide guidelines for species selection, implementation, and management such as 80% natives.
- iii. Adopt the Envision sustainability rating framework for infrastructure projects to ensure a consistent, interdepartmental sustainability improvement approach and in keeping with current policies developed and endorsed by the Office of Sustainability, the Green City Commission, and RVAH2O. Target Envision Platinum score (50% of applicable points achieved) for Green Team open space projects.
- c. Develop a mechanism for all departments to easily share information, internally and externally, about current and proposed projects for access by public and private partners.
 - i. Develop an online clearinghouse for all projects that displays current project status, such as "under review, pending permit, permit issued, under construction", etc. that is available to all city departments as well as nonprofit partners.
 - ii. RVAH2O Gi tool / Green Infrastructure Master Plan + Prioritization Tool
 - iii. Use the 5-parcel project as a pilot to create a digital tool for tracking progress, timing, and partnerships.

2. Establish Consistent Maintenance Procedures for City-Owned Property Among All City Departments

- a. Grow and support volunteer groups, community organizations, Friends groups, and nonprofits to handle more localized maintenance of Parks.
- b. Require all maintenance be conducted by Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional Certified contractors or require city staff to obtain this certification.
- c. Better transparency around costs of baseline maintenance, deferred maintenance.
- d. Promote low-maintenance practices including remeadowing, reforestation, and expansion of community gardens to move away from mowing turfgrass.
- e. Require every project plan or funding request to include a detailed maintenance plan and budget for at least 5 years out from completion. Could include that a % of overall budget must include maintenance.

- f. Update the city's tree ordinance to better achieve Richmond 300's Urban Tree Canopy goal of 60%.⁶
 - i. Create an Urban Forest Master Plan to provide a city-wide plan for increasing, maintaining, and monitoring Richmond's urban forest through robust community outreach and advisory groups.
 - ii. Create and regularly update a Tree Management Plan to establish best management practices for planting, maintenance, and care of the urban forest.
 - iii. Require that the Urban Forestry division be managed by individuals with Urban Forestry expertise and backgrounds.
 - iv. Increase public outreach around importance and care of city trees through education, events, and community tree plantings.
 - v. Establish a Richmond Tree Committee to support city tree projects, advise on tree policy, engage the community, and coordinate the city's annual Arbor Day celebration in accordance with Tree City USA requirements.

3. Adopt Use of Proffers or Impact Fees on New Developments

- a. Impose green space or tree canopy requirements to increase access and address urban heat island effect
- b. Offer Fee-in-lieu for green reqs where necessary
- c. Existing state enabling legislation restricts localities in the Richmond Metropolitan Statistical Area to fund the creation of parks, open space, and recreation areas and related facilities through the use of impact fees. Remove this restriction through the introduction of legislation at the 2021 General Assembly session.
 - i. § 15.2-2329. Imposition of impact fees.⁷
 - ii. § 15.2-961. Replacement of trees during the development process in certain localities.⁸

4. Establish or Identify Funding sources for the creation and maintenance of parks, greenspace, and other appropriate city-owned properties that have greenspace potential for infrastructure or community enhancement..

- a. Impact fees
- b. Trust for Public Lands
- c. Bond referendum

⁶ Throwing Shade in RVA – Jeremy Hoffman. <http://jeremyscolthoffman.com/throwing-shade>

⁷ § 15.2-2329. Imposition of impact fees

⁸ § 15.2-961. Replacement of trees during development process in certain localities

- d. Review of maintenance costs / responsibilities
- e. Internal grants writer
- f. Public / private stakeholder citizen group charged with seeking out grant opportunities
 - i. Community member from each district
 - ii. Create a "citizen advisory" group that includes representation from other city-departments as well as experts in the community to fill capacity gaps in Parks/Rec, advise on community engagement and funding sources. (This is redundant, so remove this part if necessary.)
 - iii. Elevate the public/private partnership discussion and strategy to create a small group of experts in diverse and alternate revenue streams. Include planners, developers, nonprofits and other professionals. Keep it small and efficient.
 - iv. Require funding plan with all proposals.

5. Public Engagement and Education Process

- a. Digital format to gather information
- b. Include an accessible, equitable process for input from those without access to internet or transportation to community meetings
- c. Work through grassroots neighborhood channels, Friends groups, church congregations, and community leaders.
- d. Utilize merchants, small businesses, and business associations in the neighborhoods like Market at 25th or others across the city
- e. Utilize the "citizen advisory" group

IV. Conclusion

The recommendations contained in this report are intended to proliferate quality parks and greenspaces across Richmond to ensure all Richmonders reside within a ten-minute walk of a park or greenspace.

Appendix

Trust for Public Land. <https://www.tpl.org/city/richmond-virginia>

§ 15.2-2329. Imposition of impact fees

§ 15.2-961. Replacement of trees during development process in certain localities

Sustainable Practices for our Public Landscapes - Anna Aquino, Projects Committee Chair, Capital Trees, January 8, 2020.

Martin Luther King Jr. UNITY Park Project - Rick Tatnall, Replenish Richmond / East End Community Collaboration, January 19, 2019.

Envision: Fact Sheet and Checklist

Memorandum of Understanding - Enrichmond Foundation's TreeLab program and the Amelia Street School

Henrico County 2016 Bond Referendum

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30058-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30058-9/fulltext)