



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Staff Report

UDC 2026-05	Conceptual Review Meeting Date: 4/16/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Nissa Richardson / Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (PRCF)
Project Description	UDC 2026-05 CONCEPT Location, Character, and Extent review of Bryan Park dam removal and stream restoration, located at 4308 Hermitage Road.
Project Location	
Address: 4308 Hermitage Road	
Property Owner: City of Richmond – Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (PRCF)	
High-Level Details: <p>The project removes the Youngs Pond dams in Bryan Park and restore the Upham Brook watershed to improve ecological function. Enhancements include invasive species management, native landscaping, and two pedestrian bridges to maintain connectivity through the park.</p>	
Staff Contact	Raymond.Roakes@rva.gov
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	Please see Applicant Narrative.
Conditions for Approval	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant to amend plans to show FallLine Trail alignment on and adjacent to project site for FINAL application. 2. Staff recommends that lighting be dark sky compliant, or similar. 3. Staff recommends signage include information on the surrounding natural area and wetlands, in addition to the site's history.

Findings of Fact

Site Description	Bryan Park is a 247-acre property in North Richmond, bounded to the east by Hermitage Road, south and west by interstate highways. The park is surrounded by established residential neighborhoods and will include a portion of the FallLine Trail running north to south through the park.
Scope of Review	The project is subject to Location, Character, and Extent review under Section 17.07 and design recommendations under Section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter.
Prior Approvals	UDC 2024-31 FINAL Fall Line Trail Bryan Park
Project Description	<p>The Applicant states in the narrative:</p> <p><i>The project removes the Youngs Pond dams in Bryan Park to achieve DCR Dam Safety compliance, restore the Upham Brook watershed, and improve ecological function. Enhancements include invasive species management, native landscaping, and two pedestrian bridges to maintain connectivity through the park.</i></p> <p><i>The ponds near Bryan Park Avenue, collectively known as Youngs Pond, are impounded by two 1910s era concrete masonry dams. The dams are owned and operated by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities. The Lower Dam is regulated by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Dam Safety Program, while the Upper Dam does not meet the size thresholds for state regulation.</i></p> <p><i>The Narrative also states there are structural issues with the dams and failure could create potential for loss of life.</i></p> <p><i>Ecological improvements will diversify wildlife habitats, improve water quality, restore natural stream function, remove invasive vegetation, and provide fish passage to over five miles of upstream habitat. The project also aims to enrich the Bryan Park user experience by improving connectivity and accessibility, enhancing existing viewsheds, interpreting the site's history through salvaged materials and educational signage, creating additional respite areas, and supporting existing park programming.</i></p> <p><i>A new riparian buffer will also be established, featuring native, site-appropriate grasses, perennials, shrubs, and trees to enhance ecological function and robust measures to protect as many healthy trees as possible with the execution of an aggressive invasive vegetation removal and long-term management plan. Replanting plans include 450 new trees within the project area.</i></p> <p><i>Site amenities include a dedicated gathering space and trailheads that will feature reused materials from the project site, such as salvaged cobbles, concrete bollards, and trees that will be reintroduced into the landscape as paving, seating, and stream features. The space will also include informal fishing areas, a low-water riffle crossing at Princeton Creek, and opportunities for bird watching in diverse habitats.</i></p> <p>The northern most pedestrian bridge will include a segment of the Fall Line Trail, which was previously approved by the UDC in 2024 (UDC 2024-31).</p> <p>The Applicant states in the narrative that significant outreach has been completed for this project.</p> <p>(see next page for Staff Analysis)</p>

Staff Analysis

RVA 300 Objective 2.1 – Complete Neighborhoods (Pg.116) Implement green infrastructure measures and other measures outlined in RVA H2O Plan and in the Clean Water Goal of Richmond 300 to improve water quality and reduce stormwater runoff.

RVA300 Objective 4.1 – Complete Neighborhoods (Pg.126) Protect and restore natural resources.

RVA300 Objective 16.4 – Thriving Environment (Pg.191) Increase green stormwater infrastructure throughout the city, prioritizing areas with a high heat vulnerability index score.

RVA300 Objective 4.3 – Complete Neighborhoods (Pg.130) Encourage the creation of a balance of natural rather than hard landscape in creating and improving parks.

The City's RVA300 Master Plan strongly supports the restoration of wetlands and expansion of green stormwater infrastructure and stream systems.

Staff finds the project will enhance the existing park with greater natural space and natural amenities.

Staff recommends that any lighting be dark sky compliant, or similar, due to the natural setting.

Staff supports the signage explaining the site's history - and encourages information on wetlands and surrounding natural area.

The project will also include significant reuse of existing materials, so the standard related condition is not necessary.

Since the project will impact the FallLine Trail alignment, further details have been requested to be provided for FINAL application. Specifically the proposed alignment of the trail as it crosses the Upper Bridge, between Bryan Park Ave and Joseph Bryan Lane, and if it will be a shared path or separated.

Staff supports approval of this application with Conditions.
(and is looking forward to seeing the project upon completion)



Upper Bridge rendering. The lower bridge will be similar.