



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

PAC 2019-004: Section 17.05 Review of a public art installation consisting of seven murals to be painted on storm drains in the vicinity of three public libraries.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Public Art Commission
Date: October 7, 2019

PETITIONER

Justin Doyle, Community Conservation Manager, James River Association

PROJECT LOCATIONS

The James River Association is seeking permission to paint seven storm drains in the vicinity of three Richmond Public Libraries. Exact locations include:

- East End Branch Library (R Street at N. 25th Street)
- Main Branch Library (E. Main Street at N. 1st & 2nd streets)
- Westover Hills Branch Library (Devonshire Road at Westover Hills Blvd)

PURPOSE

To increase public awareness of stormwater pollution and celebrate native animal species that call the James River and Richmond region home.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Background:

Stormwater pollution contributes to poor water quality in the James River and its tributaries. The James River Association and Art on Wheels launched the Paint Out Pollution project in 2017 to promote awareness of the critical environmental issue.

This year's project will use the image of Ripple the Library Otter, mascot of Richmond Public Libraries. The James River Association is working with Art on Wheels—a non-profit RVA arts organization—to create a stencil of Ripple that volunteers will use to paint the storm drains. In addition, each image will include the message, "Your river starts here. Only rain in the drain."

The storm drain murals will be temporary as the paint used (Montana Black spray paint) tends to fade over time. The James River Association and Art on Wheels have the ability to provide ongoing maintenance to storm drain art. Maintenance is contingent on funding.

Other partners include Richmond Public Libraries and the Department of Public Utilities that provided a letter of approval dated August 28, 2019 granting permission to paint the storm drains.

Correlation to Public Art Master Plan:

- Involves temporary “commissions” (p 8)
- Encourages community-based involvement in a public art project (p 7 & 8)

Recommendation: On September 26, 2019, the Public Art Commission voted to recommend approval of this project with the following conditions:

1. Before the project proceeds, the James River Association should research non-toxic paint options rather than using Montana Black spray paint.
2. The petitioner shall be responsible for obtaining and adhering to all necessary permissions and permits for the project as required by the Department of Public Utilities.
3. The petitioner shall be responsible for the cost, maintenance, and installation of the mural.

Staff Contact:

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