



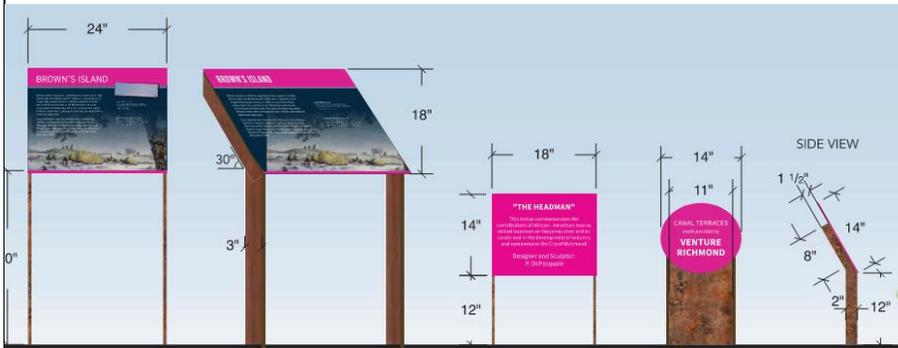
Staff Report
 City of Richmond, Virginia
Planning Commission



UDC 2025-23	SIGNAGE PACKAGE Meeting Date: 7/15/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Ryan Rinn, Capitol Projects Planner, Parks and Recreation
Project Description	UDC 2025-23 SIGNAGE PACKAGE for the separately approved renovation of Browns Island, located at 500 Tredegar St.
Project Location	
Address: 500 Tredegar Street	
Property Owner: City Of Richmond Department Parks and Recreation	
High-Level Details: This submittal is for review of the signage and environmental graphics for Browns Island, as part of the separately approved larger renovation plan.	
UDC Recommendation	UDC recommends Approval
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, Raymond.Roakes@rva.gov
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	UDC 2025-15 was approved by the UDC on May 15, 2025. Outreach detailed in Applicant Report.
Conditions for Approval	Recommended Conditions: 1. Applicant to include language on signage regarding littering and removal of the graphic on the restroom building.

Findings of Fact

<p>Site Description</p>	<p>The project site is located at 1 Brown’s island and is bordered by Tredegar Street and 10th Street to the North and West, the Manchester Bridge to the East, and the James River to the South. Brown’s island includes hardscape and open space for events, as well as walking paths, and landscaped areas along the canal and river.</p> <p>Notable sites that surround the project area include: Historic Tredegar Iron Works to the North, T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge to the South, and the Richmond Canal Walk along the North Bank of the Haxall Mill Canal.</p>
<p>Scope of Review</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Prior Approvals</p>	<p>The larger Browns Island project was approved by the Planning Commission in May of 2025.</p>
<p>Project Description</p>	<p><u>The Applicant States:</u></p> <p><i>The Browns Island Improvement Plan was created in 2019 through a collaborative design process led by Venture Richmond, building on the ideas included in the City’s 2012 Riverfront Master Plan. The purpose of the plan is to make Browns Island an even better event and festival venue while also fully realizing its potential as a thriving urban park that engages and appeals to all Richmonders. An over-arching goal of the plan is to increase visitor engagement by creating multiple new unique destinations and experiences on the island while also improving accessibility, visitor comfort, and event logistics. This submittal is for review of the signage and environmental graphics for the island.</i></p> <p><u>Staff Review:</u></p> <p>The proposed sign package enhances pedestrian wayfinding and experience through the to be renovated Browns Island park.</p> <p>The sign package includes a color palette of vibrant colors and rust patina. Colors were chosen for visibility on a background of rust patina on many of the larger signs.</p>   <p>This is a typical example of the larger directional signage. The design uses topographic data from the James River surrounding Browns Island to provide the stylized design at the top and bottom.</p>



These are other proposed typical signage types. The proposed designs mix well with other existing signage along the James River Park System and City Parks.

Staff supports the proposed sign package. The proposed signage is of high quality design and material, and integrates well with the larger park system.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval with no conditions.

UDC Review

The UDC approved this item on consent agenda. It was recommended to the Applicant that littering signage and more detailed bathroom signage be added to the package. The UDC asked about the usage of such a bright color choice in conjunction with surrounding natural tones, and the use of thin strands in the cut out of some of the signage.

UDC Recommendation

The UDC recommended approval with an additional condition.

Recommended Conditions:

1. Applicant to include language on signage regarding littering and removal of the graphic on the restroom building.

Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	Text	Staff Analysis
Master Plan		
<p>Big Moves:</p> <p>iv. Provide Greenways & Parks for All (R300, p.197)</p> <p>v. Reconnect the City (R300, p.199)</p> <p>vi. Realign City Facilities (R300, p.201)</p>	<p>Provide Greenways & Parks for All: Develop parks and greenways so that by 2037 100% of Richmonders live within a 10-minute walk of a park.</p> <p>Reconnect the City: Cap highways to reknit neighborhoods destroyed by interstates, build/improve bridges, introduce street grids, and make the city easier to access by foot, bike, and transit.</p> <p>Realign City Facilities: Improve</p>	<p>The project will transform an underutilized and inaccessible site into a regional park destination, significantly expanding access to public green space.</p> <p>With proximity to Downtown, Manchester, and major trail systems, Mayo Island serves as a physical and symbolic connector between historically divided neighborhoods.</p> <p>The use of city-owned land as public green space supports the City's goals for climate resilience, equity, and community-centered investment.</p>

	<p><i>City buildings (schools, libraries, fire stations, police stations, etc.) to provide better services in efficient, shared-use, accessible facilities to better match and serve the growing city.</i></p>	
<p>Urban Design Guidelines</p>		
<p>Signs Placement and Size</p> <p><i>A sign should fit the architecture of the building. A sign should not be too large for a building or overwhelm its architecture. Signs should not obstruct architectural elements and details that define a building’s design. Signs should be placed so that they are sensitive to the signs of adjacent businesses.</i></p> <p><i>Freestanding signs should also relate to the architecture of the building. The sign's base may be constructed of like building materials. Additional traffic signs should be coordinated with existing or new poles to avoid additional clutter.</i></p> <p>Message</p> <p><i>A sign's message should be easy to read and direct. It should not contain too much information. The message should clearly relate to the use of the building. The use of "sponsor" advertising should be discouraged. This type of advertising has an assembly line appearance, sends a confusing message, and does not promote individual store identity.</i></p> <p>Lettering</p> <p><i>Generally, sign lettering should be 4 to 14 inches high and should be proportional to the area in which it will be displayed. One inch should be added to the lettering height for each additional 50 feet between the sign and the viewer. The lettering style should be easy to read and should reflect the image of the business it represents.</i></p> <p>Color</p> <p><i>Sign colors should relate to and complement the materials and color scheme of the building, including accent highlights and trim colors. The stronger the color contrast between the lettering and the background, the easier it is to read the sign. For example, light colored lettering will read better against a dark colored background.</i></p> <p>Illumination</p> <p><i>Internally illuminated signs are not appropriate in or adjacent to residential areas. Internally illuminated signs should have light lettering and dark, opaque backgrounds for improved readability and minimal glare. For externally illuminated signs, the spotlights should be shielded to minimize glare. All lighting and electrical parts should be concealed from view. Signs should not contain elements that could be visually distracting. Additionally, electronic signage and its display will be dictated by current zoning.</i></p> <p>Landscaping</p>	<p>The UDC Guidelines on signage do not directly address signage within a park, being more geared toward signage viewed from vehicles or on buildings.</p> <p>With that said, themes include visibility, compatibility with surrounding character, and quality.</p> <p>The proposed signage is made of sturdy materials, that are designed to integrate with surrounding industrial character. The design was chosen for visibility and messaging is clear and simple on the sign faces.</p>	

Freestanding signs should be landscaped with appropriate deciduous and evergreen shrubs, ground cover planting, annuals and/or perennials.

Additional Requirements

All signs are subject to the applicable sign requirements set forth in Article V of the City of Richmond's Zoning Ordinance. For signs that encroach into the public right-of-way, additional guidance may be found in the "Encroachment" chapter of this document.