



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2025-020: To declare a public necessity for and to authorize the acquisition of the parcels of real property owned by the Capital Region Land Conservancy, Inc., located at 1401 Brander Street and 1421 Brander Street for the purpose of maintaining such properties as public greenspace and enhancing connectivity for the Richmond Slave Trail within the James River Park System.

Ord. No. 2025-021: To grant a conservation and open-space easement on the property known as 1401 Brander Street and 1421 Brander Street to the Capital Region Land Conservancy, Inc. and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 4, 2025

PETITIONER

Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities (PRCF) is excited to be partnering with Capital Region Land Conservancy (CRLC) to add approximately 4.14 acres of land to the James River Park System. Norfolk Southern Railway Co. is retaining 0.731-acre portion of the 5.203-acre parcel for the purposes of a 20' right-of-way.

The subject property is part of The Richmond Slave Trail. The Richmond Slave Trail is a 3-mile walking trail that chronicles the history of the trade in enslaved Africans to Virginia until 1808, and away from Virginia, especially Richmond, to other locations in the Americas until 1865. It begins at Manchester Docks (Ancarrow's Landing), a port in the downriver slave trade that made Richmond the largest source of enslaved Africans on the east coast of the United States from 1830 to 1865. The trail follows a route along the south bank of the James River, crosses to the north side, then beside the reconciliation statue which commemorates the international triangular slave trade, past Lumpkins Jail and the Negro Burial Ground to First African Baptist Church, a center of African American life in pre-Civil War Richmond.

The trail was informally established in the early 1990s by the Richmond Unity Walk which became a City Commission in 1994 to recognize sites associated with African American history. In 1998, the Richmond Unity Walk Commission transformed into the City Council Slave Trail Commission. In 2011, 17 Richmond Slave Trail Markers were installed along the trail that chronical the history of the trade in enslaved Africans. In 2019, plans were developed to create a trail head at Ancarrow's Landing and to make much need repairs to the trail along the south bank of the James River, these plans cannot be completed until city of Richmond acquires the Norfolk Southern Railway Co. property at Brander Street.

The City may enter into an early access agreement with CRLC to perform Slave Trail improvements. The City will adhere to restrictive covenants outlined in the attached deed between CRLC and Norfolk Southern Railway Co.

PRCF is prepared for the ongoing maintenance after the acquisition of this property.

Staff recommends approval of this request.

Staff Contact:

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