



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia

UDC Report to CPC

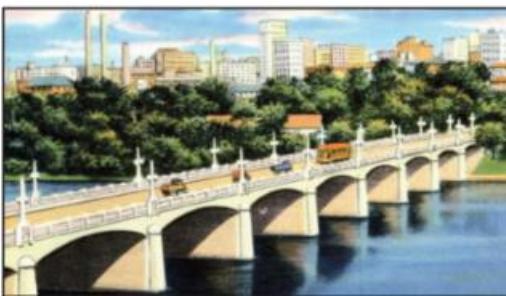
RICHMOND PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

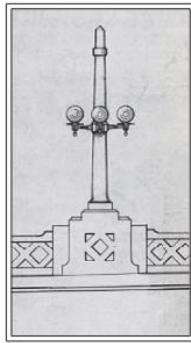
PDR

UDC 2026-01	CONCEPT – Location, Character, and Extent	Meeting Date: 1/20/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Dr. John Kim / Dept. Public Works	
Project Description	UDC 2026-01 CONCEPT Location, Character, Extent review of the proposed replacement of Mayo Bridge, located between Manchester Road and Dock Street.	
Project Location		
Address: Write project address here.		
Property Owner: City Of Richmond		
High-Level Details: The project proposes demolition and replacement of the existing Mayo Bridge. The proposed bridge will include one travel lane in each direction, bike lanes, wide sidewalks, and design features reflecting the existing historic bridge.		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes – Raymond.Roakes@rva.gov	
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	The project received an initial consultation and feedback from the UDC in February of 2023. Please see narrative for details on public outreach.	
Conditions for Approval	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Revise plans, for FINAL application, to show details of how pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle lanes connect both north and south of the bridge to existing transportation networks and to the adjacent Richmond Slave Trail. Revise plans to incorporate low height, high contrast visible barriers for protected bike lanes for FINAL review.	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Revise plans to incorporate sidewalk of the same width on both sides of the bridge for FINAL review. 3. Provide a rendered elevation of the cross section of the bridge at FINAL review. 4. Provide updated plans for the Mayo Island Park at FINAL review. 5. Provide an updated community survey at FINAL review. 6. Explore final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant, where applicable. 7. Explore inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable stormwater features, where appropriate, and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines. 8. Explore the inclusion of public art, where feasible. 9. Explore spacing lighting fixtures in such a way that they are incorporated into the architectural design. 10. Explore making railing more permeable to allow for visibility of the river. 11. Explore the use of plantings on the bridge. 12. Explore adding additional safety measures to the pedestrian crossings on the island.
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Findings of Fact

Site Description	Mayo Bridge is a primary crossing for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle traffic across the James River – between Manchester and Shockoe Bottom. The bridge crosses Mayo Island, which was recently approved as public open space and placed in an environmental protection easement. The bridge is over 112 years old and in dire need of replacement.
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	N/A
Project Description	<p>The project proposes to replace the Mayo Bridge. The bridge is over 112 years old and is in dire need of replacement. The bridge crosses Mayo Island and is a primary connection between Shockoe Bottom and Manchester for all types of users.</p> <p><u>Existing Bridge</u></p> <p>The existing bridge is an early 1900's design, with inspiration from Egyptian and Parisian motifs. The bridge consists of a tan masonry/concrete material, with a series of bridge piers and arch spans making up the structure.</p> 



Originally, lighting was hung on concrete obelisks for the length of the bridge. This lighting consisted of round orbs.

Current lighting is facilitated on the remaining obelisks and consists of standard city lighting fixtures.

The sides of the bridge consist of solid concrete parapet with a cross hatching.

The bridge is currently two traffic lanes in each direction. Sidewalk is present, but not to current standards by any means. The bridge connects through the Richmond Flood Wall on both the north and south entrances; these openings are constriction points to any proposed design.

Mayo Island Conservation Easement:

14.5 acres of Mayo Island will be protected in perpetuity under easement held by Capital Region Land Conservancy and DCR, including caps on impervious surface and restrictions on new development. The proposed bridge meets requirements of this easement, including location and disturbance.

Master Plan

The Riverfront plan states the following for the Mayo Bridge- including historical accurate design, historically accurate fixtures, wider sidewalks, safety, and providing access to Mayo Island.

MAYO BRIDGE

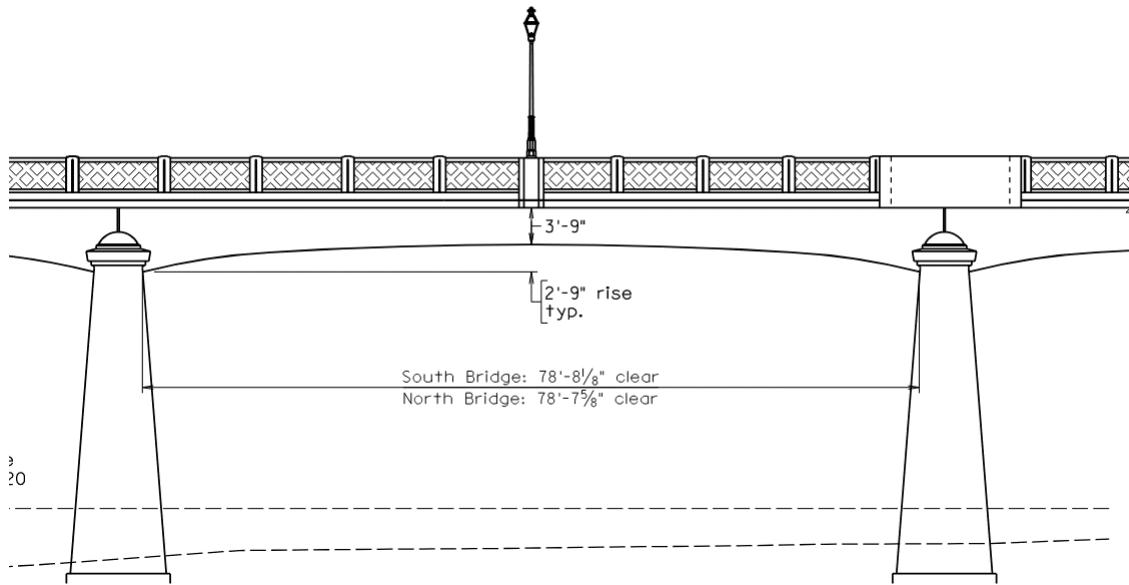
The 1913 Mayo Bridge is the last remaining historic bridge crossing the James River in Richmond. A 2011 analysis and feasibility study has proposed multiple alternatives for the bridge in need of either significant rehabilitation or near total reconstruction. The Mayo Bridge/14th St (U.S. Route 360) is part of the National Highway System. The following guiding principles for the review of the design options available to the City will be followed before any final recommendations are made. Any rehabilitation or reconstruction of the Mayo Bridge will:

- Maintain the historically accurate architectural appearance of the existing Mayo Bridge.
- Implement historically accurate architectural lighting fixtures for the Bridge.
- Install wider sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians and other activities (e.g., fishing, sightseeing, etc.)
 - Safely accommodate all forms of transportation across the bridge including:
 - Pedestrians and bicycles
 - Vehicular traffic
 - Existing public transit and potential future transit options
 - Use the existing access doors in the flood wall
 - Provide access to Mayo Island

There will be opportunities for continued dialogue and input with the public, the Planning Commission, and the State and Federal oversight agencies before any recommendation is made prior to the start of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process which must be followed.

SECTION 2: RIVERFRONT PLAN

Proposed Bridge



The proposed bridge takes note from the historical existing bridge in its design. The material and the parapet design closely match the existing, along with the bridge piers and spans. The proposed light fixtures will be the City Standard fixture that is used currently throughout Shockoe Bottom. Overlooks will be provided for pedestrian use and use by fisherman.



The layout of the bridge will be one vehicle lane and one bike lane in each direction, separated by 4 foot wide spacer markings. The proposed sidewalk is 14 feet on the north side and 8 feet wide on the south side of the bridge. A raised intersection and additional safety features, plus bus pull off lanes, are proposed on Mayo Island.

The bridge will connect to Manchester, on the southern end, with a layout that was approved with the Canal Bridge Project – 8 foot wide sidewalk on either side with the “future” condition option of one vehicle and one bike lane in each direction up to the train tracks.

The bridge will connect with Shockoe Bottom, on the northern end, up to the flood wall, with one traffic lane and one bike lane in each direction. It is still to be determined what needs to be updated beyond the flood wall. **It is Staff's recommendation that this detail be provided at the time of**

FINAL review. And that the extent of this connection be completed up to Dock Street, on either side of 14th Street.

Additionally, the Richmond Slave Trail travels across the Mayo Bridge and exits just prior to the floodwall on the southern end of the bridge. **It is Staffs recommendation that FINAL plans show a connection to this path, even if it is similar to what is existing today onsite.**

Overall, the proposed plans address themes that are presented within the Riverfront plan. The architectural design of the bridge is consistent with the historical existing bridge. The design also makes significant advances in pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety with the lane reduction, bike lanes, and wider sidewalk.

PDR Staff has worked very closely with the DPW and Bridge planning teams throughout this process and thanks them for their work. The community has also been very active in the design of the bridge through the Manchester Alliance and Shockoe Bottom Business & Neighborhood Association.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. Staff recommends that final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant, where applicable.
2. Staff recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable stormwater features, where appropriate, and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.
3. Staff recommends the inclusion of public art, where feasible.
4. Staff recommends that the plans be revised, for FINAL application, to show details of how pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle lanes connect both north and south of the bridge to existing transportation networks and to the adjacent Richmond Slave Trail.

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The UDC expressed concern for lack of protected bike lanes with physical protection; the Fire Dept reported that issues of emergency response makes it difficult to provide physical installation. The Fire Dept stated that providing barriers on the bike lanes will limit the vehicle travel space on the bridge, including allowing traffic to move out of the way of emergency vehicles responding to a call and including responding to the new Mayo Island Park area. The Fire Dept also pointed out that mountable barriers or low clearance barriers may snag on the underside of a fire truck, including on hydraulic lines; and that many options of bike lane protection increase the prevalence of potholes, which are detrimental to ambulance care. The UDC explored options for physical protections with the applicant.

The UDC expressed concern for the location of the lighting fixtures. The applicant stated the lighting fixtures will be located per lighting standards and not related to cadence of bridge design. Light fixtures match those in Shockoe Bottom/14th Street, not fixtures in Manchester or on the Canal Bridge.

The UDC spoke about the design of the railings, access to the Mayo Island Park, the use of the bridge for fishing and overlooks.

Members of the public spoke to referencing the historic bridge in the proposed design, the need to provide a bridge that meets modern needs over historic design, the quality of public outreach on the project, the design of the proposed bridge railing, separating bike lane from vehicle lane, views of the river from travel lanes, how the bridge is major connection between neighborhood on both sides of the river and Mayo Park, the bridge as an economic driver, importance of non-vehicular experience, the need to think of the entire bridge corridor rather than just of the Mayo Bridge extent, designing for future use, the need for protected bike lanes.

The UDC recommended approval with the following conditions:

1. Revise plans, for FINAL application, to show details of how pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle lanes connect both north and south of the bridge to existing transportation networks and to the adjacent Richmond Slave Trail. Revise plans to incorporate low height, high contrast visible barriers for protected bike lanes for FINAL review.
2. Revise plans to incorporate sidewalk of the same width on both sides of the bridge for FINAL review.
3. Provide a rendered elevation of the cross section of the bridge at FINAL review.
4. Provide updated plans for the Mayo Island Park at FINAL review.
5. Provide an updated community survey at FINAL review.
6. Explore final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant, where applicable.
7. Explore inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable stormwater features, where appropriate, and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.
8. Explore the inclusion of public art, where feasible.
9. Explore spacing lighting fixtures in such a way that they are incorporated into the architectural design.
10. Explore making railing more permeable to allow for visibility of the river.
11. Explore the use of plantings on the bridge.
12. Explore adding additional safety measures to the pedestrian crossings on the island.