



Staff Report
 City of Richmond, Virginia
Planning Commission



UDC 2026-06	Conceptual Review Meeting Date: 5/18/2026
Applicant/Petitioner	Nissa Richardson / Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (PRCF)
Project Description	UDC 2026-06 CONCEPT Location, Character, and Extent review of a new riverside park, located at 3021 Dock Street.
Project Location	
Address: 3021 Dock Street	
Property Owner: City of Richmond – Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (PRCF)	
High-Level Details: The Dock Street Park plan is a design strategy that activates and re-landscapes an existing 4.5 acre post-industrial site on Richmond’s east riverfront.	
UDC RECOMENDATION	Approval, with conditions
Staff Contact	Raymond.Roakes@rva.gov
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	Please see Applicant Narrative.
Conditions for Approval	UDC Recommended Conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff recommends the applicant identify potential locations for art installations for FINAL review. 2. Staff recommends the applicant include dark sky compliant, or similar, lighting where appropriate for FINAL review.

Findings of Fact

Site Description	Dock Street Park is a 4.3-acre property along the James River near Great Ship Lock Park. The current property is undeveloped. The Capital Trail goes along the northern edge of the property.
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 Applicant states the purpose of the Dock Street Park design is to transform an underutilized and formerly industrial riverfront parcel into a resilient, accessible, and ecologically vibrant public park. The design prioritizes riverfront access, habitat restoration, and passive recreation and creates a destination that connects residents and visitors to the James River. Key elements include accessible pathways, a “river get-down,” interpretive and educational spaces, and flexible areas for gathering, relaxation, and outdoor learning. The park is designed to balance human use with environmental stewardship, characterized by native plantings, stormwater management, and long-term ecological health.</p> <p>The Capital Trail goes along the northern edge of the property.</p> <p>Staff Analysis</p> <p><i>RVA300 Objective 4.1 – Complete Neighborhoods (Pg.126) Protect and restore natural resources.</i></p> <p><i>RVA300 Objective 4.2 - Complete Neighborhoods (pg.128) Integrate public art into the built environment to acknowledge Richmond’s unique history and neighborhood identity, and engage the creative community, focusing public art efforts in areas that do not have public art today.</i></p> <p><i>RVA300 Objective 4.3 – Complete Neighborhoods (Pg.129) Integrate natural features, history, culture, and art to enhance public open spaces throughout the city.</i></p> <p><i>RVA300 Objective 4.3 – Complete Neighborhoods (Pg.130) Reserve appropriate riverfront and canal-facing sites for public amenities and river-related development such as boating services, picnics, etc.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>RVA300 Objective 16.4 – Thriving Environment (Pg.191) Increase green stormwater infrastructure throughout the city, prioritizing areas with a high heat vulnerability index score.</i></p> <p><i>RVA300 Objective 17.1 – Thriving Environment (Pg.194) Rely on principles of crime prevention through environmental design rather than police presence to ensure park safety.</i></p> <p>The subject property currently consists of an open lot. The proposal includes a wide range of amenities such as access to the river, rest areas, play areas, and additional views of the river and city skyline. Boating access will be provided. The project is accessed from Dock Street and continues pathing from adjacent parcels and the Capital Trail.</p> <p>The project proposes native plantings and stormwater facilities that are attractively integrated into the design. Activity nodes are integrated into the proposed planting plans to create a natural balance of hardscape/landscape. The natural landscape of the river’s edge will be preserved and enhanced with invasive removals.</p> <p>The majority of the park is visible from the street, which supports crime prevention through design.</p> <p>This location would be an ideal opportunity for the inclusion of art. Staff recommends the applicant identify potential locations for art installations on the FINAL plan.</p> <p>Staff supports approval of this application.</p> <p>-----</p>

Urban Design Committee recommends approval with Staff recommended conditions.

The UDC discussed small boat launch and how the dock area will be accessed and utilized, planting of evergreen and flowering species to increase year round interest, staffing and maintenance, path materials regarding flooding and accessibility, bike access and traffic from the Capital Trail, lighting, and how trash will be serviced.