

**From:** Ceci Amrhein <ceci.amrhein@joynerfineproperties.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 5, 2022 2:42 PM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR; Lewis, Mark G. - DPW; Jordan, Katherine  
- City Council  
**Subject:** Lee Circle planting proposal

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Dear Mr. Roakes, I received a copy of the proposed plantings at the circle. I know it is a temporary fix until a more permanent plan is developed, but the city's track record is pretty dismal at maintaining anything except weeds. Maybe a plan requiring less maintenance would be doable.

Thank you and my cell is 804-356-0236.



*Ceci-Amrhein-Gallasch*

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## Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

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**From:** Brian Bills <brian.w.bills@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 27, 2022 11:55 PM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Cc:** Philipsen, Sven J. - City Council  
**Subject:** MDP / Lee Circle landscaping

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Hello Mr. Roakes,

As someone who lived a few blocks away on Cary & Meadow and would often stroll around the neighborhood, Marcus David Peters Circle became, for at least a few months, my vision of what we should want in our city. It brought together people across the boundaries of class and race. It was actively managed by the community. It was consistently a place of joy and energy. It offered education, recreation, and remembrance. There is, in my opinion, no better example of what a thriving, vibrant Richmond could look like. In particular, as we think about "urban design," the use of the circle during that period is the highest example of urban design I can think of in our city.

I deeply hope that the city will allow people in Richmond to use MDP Circle again. I don't know enough to say what type of landscaping is and is not compatible with that, but the city's hostile intention with the current fences is clear. I'd like to hear that the people who made MDP Circle such a bright spot in a dark time are given input over how to redesign the space now that the monument has been removed. I suggest halting the redesign until you have gotten input from the people who activated that space last year.

Best,  
Brian

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Brian Bills  
434.420.6007 (m)  
[brian.w.bills@gmail.com](mailto:brian.w.bills@gmail.com)

**From:** Molly Dellinger-Wray <mollydwrap@me.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 9, 2022 9:39 AM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Subject:** Besides plants, what's the plan?

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Good morning Mr. Roakes,

The residents of the 1600 and 1800 block of Monument are greeting the news of the fence removal with a mixture of anticipation and dread. The fences are indeed an eye sore, and Richmond deserves better.

Regardless of landscape design, as a resident and representative of my neighborhood organization, MAPS, I and several of my neighbors would like to know what the plan is for deterring many of the issues that plagued us in the summer of 2020 including:

- Parking violations
- Late night parties and noise
- Fireworks
- Lack of police response
- Guns
- Assaults and verbal threats
- Open drinking and pot smoking
- Graffiti
- Lack of public rest rooms
- Motorcade of motorcycles and ATVs on the median strip and driving in the wrong direction

Social media sites are already blowing up with invitations to “get lit” at the circle. I believe there are several workable solutions, but they require some sensitive forethought, planning and a proactive stance rather than a reactive one. Can you please inform the us how this will be managed without aggravating an already stressed police force? I believe the residents and the community have a right to this information.

Thank you.

Molly Dellinger-Wray  
1834 Monument Ave  
804-690-3829

**From:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 7, 2022 11:40 AM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Subject:** FW: Lee Circle Landscaping

Thanks,  
-Ray

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Robert Gabay <[rgabay168@gmail.com](mailto:rgabay168@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** September 6, 2022 at 9:44:22 PM EDT  
**To:** "Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council"  
<[Ellen.Robertson@rva.gov](mailto:Ellen.Robertson@rva.gov)>  
**Subject:** Lee Circle Landscaping

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Hello Councilwoman Robertson,

My name is Robert Gabay, and I am a member of the Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, and the founder of the Chimborazo Native Food Project. The latter is a community effort to conduct ecological restoration and establish a native food forest in the aforementioned park.

I am writing regarding some of the plant choices for the Lee Monument landscaping. If we want to heal the community and envision a better future at this area, I believe it would only be appropriate for plants indigenous to Richmond to be used here, as native plants are the foundation of the ecosystem upon which human life depends.

[https://richmond.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/see-the-lee-circle-landscaping-plan-up-for-consideration-thursday/article\\_a18d158a-15f5-522f-9682-7d6aab9e58ff.html](https://richmond.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/see-the-lee-circle-landscaping-plan-up-for-consideration-thursday/article_a18d158a-15f5-522f-9682-7d6aab9e58ff.html)

I am sure the firm hired for this effort knows which plants selected are native, and which are not, but one in particular is especially problematic: *Liriope*. This plant has escaped cultivation, and

wreaks havoc in natural areas, including the James River Park System. As a native plant enthusiast, and someone who has organized the community around ecology issues, I'd like to recommend it be replaced with *Liatris spicata* or *Tradescantia Virginiana*.

Thank you for your time and hard work for our city.

Robert Gabay  
Founder, Chimborazo Native Food Project

## Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

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**From:** PDR Land Use Admin  
**Sent:** Friday, September 16, 2022 2:16 PM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Subject:** FW: Remove traffic circles completely along Monument Ave

**From:** M. Gainey [mailto:mlgainey@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 11, 2022 4:26 PM  
**To:** raymond.roakes@richmond.gov; PDR Land Use Admin <PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov>; Addison, Andreas D. - City Council <Andreas.Addison@rva.gov>; Addison, Andreas D. - City Council <Andreas.Addison@rva.gov>  
**Subject:** Remove traffic circles completely along Monument Ave

**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Please do not retain the traffic circles on Monument Avenue where the statues once stood. Eliminate the traffic circles completely.

Just do away with the vestiges altogether and make Monument an entirely straight, four-lane road with the existing grassy, tree-lined medians in the middle.

It would be safer traffic-wise, it would stop wasting thousands of dollars in taxpayer money on the necessary ongoing maintenance, and it would finally close this chapter in our city's history.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Marsha Gainey  
Richmond Resident Since 1976

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

**From:** Bill Gallasch <bill.gallasch@joynerfineproperties.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 5, 2022 3:19 PM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR; Lewis, Mark G. - DPW; Jordan, Katherine  
- City Council  
**Subject:** Lee circle plan  
**Attachments:** [davisstreetcircle.zip](#)

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Raymond, A thankless job you have trying to satisfy more than one person. I think whoever designed the landscaping did a remarkable job. It looks fantastic on paper and I am sure it will look fantastic when it is finished. BUT, that's where the good praise stops. The street is a very harsh environment. See the attached pictures of the median and the newly planted Davis street circle. The city is not equipped to handle this kind of hands-on project and I am willing to bet it will be a 3/4 acre of expensive weeds in a very short time. I hate to rain on your parade, but I am afraid the left hand does not know what the right hand can accomplish. Think trees  
P.S. Maybe a corporation would take it on!!!!  
I have lived at 2336 Monument Avenue for 28 years

Bill Gallasch  
(Cell) 804-356-0234  
Email: [Bill.Gallasch@JoynerFineProperties.com](mailto:Bill.Gallasch@JoynerFineProperties.com)

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## Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

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**From:** George Hostetler <gdhostetler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 6, 2022 4:54 PM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR; Lewis, Mark G. - DPW; Jordan, Katherine - City Council  
**Subject:** Concerns with the UDC landscaping plan at the Lee Circle

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We had many concerns during the 2020 Unrest and the same concerns now flood back to the present with this site plan.

What is the objective of the plan?

None of the other monument locations have walkways within.

The pathways encourage walking through the Circle.

How to get to the Circle? No identified walkways crossing the Lee Circle, making the crossing a safety issue.

So this plan with pathways encourages the Lee Circle to be a gathering place.

Will we have many people gathering? Are there any plans by the city to monitor activities and enforce laws?

With all the cover that these trees, grasses, shrubs and perennials provide, are we concerned about people "camping out" or performing any other illegal activities.?

Will there now be public meetings, gatherings, protests or assemblies here at the Lee Circle?

Will the DPW treat the Lee Circle as a median or a park? Will the City enforce laws that pertain to medians and parks?

Any usage by the public could result in maintenance issues ending up with an unkempt landscape.

The area surrounding the Lee Circle is a residential area and the Lee Circle was not envisioned as a gathering space.

George Hostetler and Janet Helztel  
403 N Allen Ave,  
804-614-6869

## Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

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**From:** Steve Nuckolls <steve@stevenuckolls.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 7, 2022 9:33 AM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Cc:** Jordan, Katherine - City Council; Philipsen, Sven J. - City Council; Janice Hall Nuckolls  
**Subject:** FW: Lee Circle Temporary Landscaping Plans

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Mr. Roakes,

Just wanted to ensure this got to the right person. Thanks!

Steve

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**From:** Steve Nuckolls  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 6, 2022 12:37 PM  
**To:** PDRPlanningAndPreservation@richmondgov.com  
**Cc:** Janice Hall Nuckolls <janice@tada-studio.com>  
**Subject:** Lee Circle Temporary Landscaping Plans

Urban Design Committee Members,

As long-time (over 28 years) immediately-adjacent neighbors to the Lee Circle, we have reviewed the temporary landscaping plans and see no concerns other than the proposed mulch paths. We feel these will be inviting to pedestrians, which is a recipe for disaster at such a busy and dangerous **traffic circle**. Through the years, the number of calls to the Department of Emergency Communications pales in comparison to the actual number of traffic incidents at the circle, as there have been numerous hit-and-runs that went unreported. Virtually no one yields the clearly-marked pedestrian right-of-way, the speeding is atrocious (especially with wet pavement), and we often witness cars even driving the wrong way around the circle! Even the existing security fence was recently struck by an out-of-control automobile.

Even though the circle was temporarily (and **illegally**) occupied by individuals for over a year during the recent social unrest, we think it is a **HUGE** mistake to make it attractive to pedestrians going forward. In addition, we saw a huge uptick in criminal activity during this time in our historically-stable, quiet and safe residential neighborhood. Opening this up to pedestrians will likely attract an element wishing to start trouble, and we will be back to square one with a need for a security fence.

Thanks for your consideration of our wishes. We are just trying to do our best to maintain the quality of life in our historic neighborhood and the city in general. Feel free to contact us if you'd like to discuss further. Thanks.

Steve & Janice Nuckolls  
1815 Monument Ave  
Richmond, VA 23220  
804.334.8956 (Janice)  
804.349.3293 (Steve)

Regarding Lee Circle  
09/07/2022

To the Urban Design Committee of the City of Richmond,

I am writing regarding the review of the site plan of the former Lee Circle on Monument Avenue. I urge the Urban Design Committee to reject the proposed plan and to seek a different design.

I believe that the design is inappropriate (and, in fact, detrimental) for several reasons. Most importantly, the proposed plan discourages people from gathering in and using the space. During the protests following the murder of George Floyd, the former Lee Circle (or Marcus-David Peters Circle) became a center for community discussion, speech, commemoration, creativity, and action – in short, the things that make democracy function. Much media attention was paid to the paint-covered base of the Lee Monument, which was rightly hailed as among the greatest works of protest art in American history. It was less recognized, but equally true, that the circle was, at least in 2020, one of the most interesting public spaces in America as well. The conversations and actions that I saw take place there were the beginning of a new and better Richmond. But the closure of the space cut those conversations short.

Any plan for Lee Circle, even a temporary one, should allow and encourage people to gather, discuss, express, and make use of their rights to speech and assembly in public space. Unfortunately, the proposed plan divides up the space with narrow paths and fills the remaining areas with dense plantings, thus preventing groups from assembling there. Lee Circle is the largest space on Monument Avenue and should not be treated merely as a flower bed or median strip. The current design seems to sweep the past under the rug rather than to acknowledge and encourage difficult and ongoing conversations about racism, history, and community in Richmond. For the sake of the avenue and our city, these conversations need to continue.

I urge the committee to reject the proposed design for Lee Circle and to request a plan that encourages the full use of public space for speech and assembly. I would further propose that the plan should be simple, economical, and provisional in nature, so as not to interfere with future conversations that will determine a more lasting design for Monument Avenue's public spaces.

Thank you for your time.

Don O'Keefe

don.s.okeefe@gmail.com  
804.332.3388

## Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

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**From:** Reclaiming the Monument <reclaimingthemonument@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 15, 2022 3:03 PM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Subject:** Alternative Lee Circle/MDPC Proposal  
**Attachments:** Operations\_of\_Care\_mock\_up - LaRissa Rogers (1).jpg; Garden\_beds\_mock\_up - LaRissa Rogers (1).jpg

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Hello,

My name is Alex Criqui, I am the Creative Director for Reclaiming the Monument, a grassroots public arts project here in Richmond, Virginia known for our projection work on the Lee Monument. I'm contacting you today because I would like to put forth a proposal in front of the Urban Design committee as an alternative to landscaping proposal being considered for Lee Circle/ MDPC.

As part of our work promoting community driven public art we received a proposal from artists LaRissa Rogers and Luis Vazquez Larocho for an installation of garden beds designed to exist in the space of Lee Circle/MDPC.

These garden beds would memorialize the enslaved by utilizing traditional building techniques utilized by early Black American communities, and I believe it offers an alternative to current proposal that would not only beautify the space but also honor the recent history of community involvement in that space far better than the current proposal.

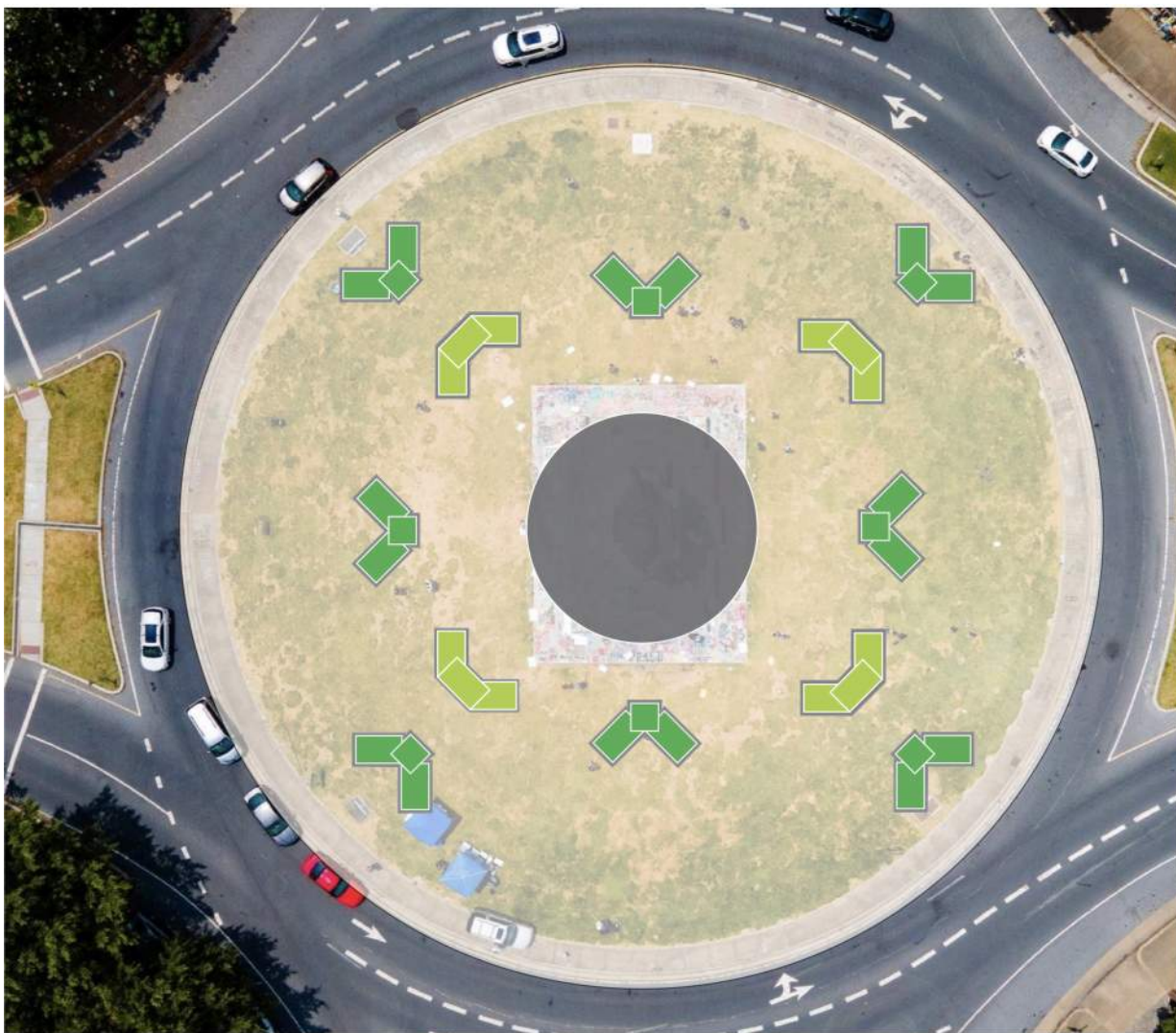
This alternative design would not only allow for greater community involvement in the space and speak to the issues of historical justice that so many citizens of our city stood up for in recent years regarding the future of Monument Avenue, it would also cost significantly less money, with a budget estimate of \$50,000.

In addition, Reclaiming the Monument would also be willing to put forth up to \$5,000 of our own resources to offset the cost as well.

Please find the designs below and let us know how best to proceed with putting a formal proposal before the Committee

Thank you very much,

Alex Criqui



## Operations of Care



Garden Bed Type A  
10ft x 6ft  
6ft x 6ft



Garden Bed Type B  
10ft x 6ft  
10ft x 6ft  
Community Garden



Marcus David Peters Circle  
50ft diameter



200ft diameter





**Reclaiming the Monument:**  
**Alternative Proposal for the Temporary Use of Lee Circle/Marcus-David**  
**Peters Circle**

*“All the public spaces that have had statues removed is an amazing opportunity for the community to create places that are meaningful and not places that are simply pretty. These projects don't need a landscaping proposal. They need a design proposal, because landscape design, public-space design is not the same as shoving something up and filling it with flowers. It's about creating places that are meaningful.”* - **Beth Meyer, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Virginia (as quoted in Virginia Public Media)**

**Statement**

Reclaiming the Monument is asking the Urban Design Committee to consider our proposal for an alternative design for the temporary use of Lee Circle/ Marcus-David Peters Circle as put forth by our supported artists LaRissa Rogers and Luis Vazques La Roche in their proposed work “Operations of Care”.

In addition, Reclaiming the Monument requests an extended period of open public solicitation so that our organization and other organizations, artists, and vendors may submit formal proposals for the temporary development of this highly important and symbolic community space. We feel that it is critical that the future of this space be determined in a transparent and open process, and not decided through dealings made behind closed doors without notice to the public that the opportunity for submission or solicitation was even a possibility.

We strongly feel that the current proposal for landscaping being considered by the Urban Design Committee is little more than an act of erasure under the guise of beautification that will further cause harm to our community by failing to acknowledge the significance of the space known as Lee Circle/Marcus-David Peters Circle and the outcry for racial and historical justice which arose from the people of our city on that very ground.

We believe that it is critical that any design, temporary or permanent, that the City of Richmond funds or supports to be placed in that space must facilitate continued community engagement and acts of healing and reclamation that continue the dismantlement of the legacies of White Supremacy that were propagated by the Lost Cause propaganda that dominated our city's public art spaces for over 130 years.

A failure to meet the challenge of this moment and to directly address the issues which are deeply intertwined within that community space will not only harm those who helped to dismantle these symbols of systemic racism but will also harm the City of Richmond and its standing in the eyes of the broader national and global community.

We can speak from first hand experience that artists, academics, activists, writers, and public officials all over our country and the world are still paying attention to our city and looking to how we handle the vital change and transformation that has happened in our community. Even a temporary step backwards will squander the goodwill and support and show that the City of Richmond is interested in expediency and erasure over helping to continue the acts of healing and reclamation which began in 2020.



Roger's and La Roche's proposed artwork offers a vital alternative that elegantly speaks to issues of race and history of that space by utilizing traditional building techniques used by early Black American communities to construct aesthetically pleasing garden beds that welcome and invite continued acts of community engagement and care for this still unhealed part of our community. Their work would not only continue the acts of care and healing begun by grassroots community efforts in the summer of 2020 but would speak to the City of Richmond's support for the people of Richmond having a say and a role in the future of this space which they so thoroughly transformed.

In addition, at an estimated budget of \$50,000, Rogers' and La Roche's proposal would be significantly cheaper than the current \$100,000 proposal being considered by the Urban Design Committee and would allow greater community access and engagement in the space of Lee Circle/ Marcus-David Peters Circle through a process which would allow community members to take place in its construction and care throughout the tenure of its presence on Monument Avenue.

Reclaiming the Monument would manage the project and oversee the use of funds by utilizing our experience in project management for large scale art installations around the city of Richmond that we have undertaken over the past three years, through which we have gained global recognition and attention.

We believe that it is vital that our city get this right and we ask that you consider our proposal and create a period through which other community members may put forth their own proposals as we determine the future of this space which has the eyes of the world upon it.

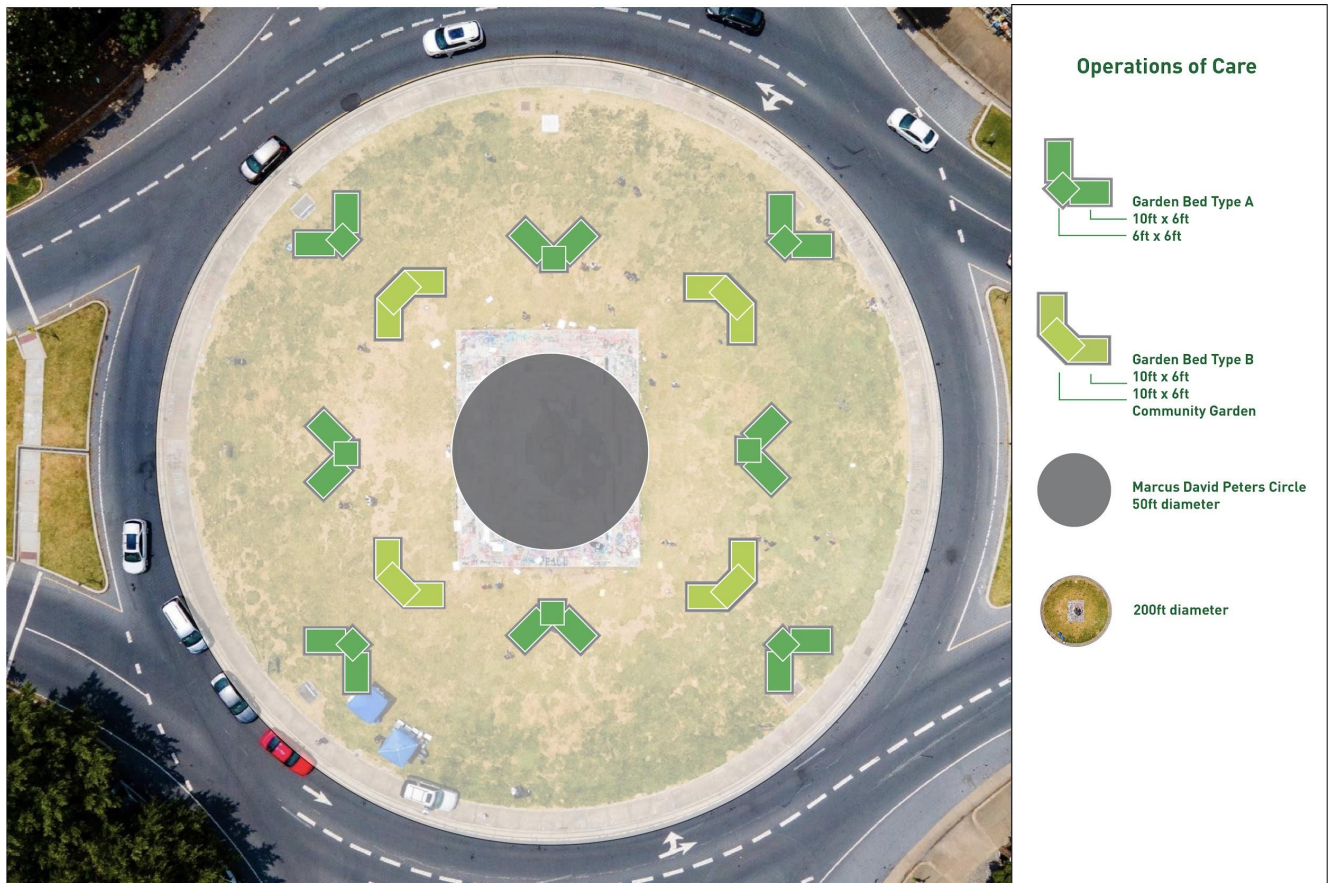
Please find further information about Rogers and La Roche and their proposed work “Operations of Care” below.

**Title:** Operations of Care

**Artists:** LaRissa Rogers & Luis Vasquez La Roche

**Estimated Cost:** \$50,000

**Summary:** Proposal for the construction of community garden beds via utilizing traditional construction methods of early Black American communities to encourage continual community engagement and acts of healing and care for the land of Lee Circle/ Marcus-David Peters Circle.





## Artists Proposal

**Operations of Care** – We are interested in creating a memorial that offers new possibilities surrounding community care, black and brown leisure, and reciprocity. Black and brown communities have used these methods of tending to one another since being transplanted from their homelands. Acknowledging the land in which the Lee monument once stood, and the racial climate that continues to rule today, we borrow from Saidiya Hartman and ask the question: “How can we refuse to silence the ongoing past, and foster a radically different kind of care to bear the present?” We would like to create a community gathering space and garden in the location where the Robert E Lee statue once stood. The

raised garden beds will frame the grassy circular intersection in an overlooking of three, using the soil from that location to grow the food and plants within the beds. The exterior of the beds will be covered in tabby, and elevated on tabby brick plinths (reference work sample, Operations\_of\_care\_mock\_up).

**Tabby** – Tabby is a mix of lime, sand, and water historically used by enslaved africans and black communities as a substitute for concrete. The lime was obtained by cooking whole oyster shells in a kiln, then "slaking" the shells by adding water to them - in this process the shells break down ([https://www.nps.gov/timu/learn/historyculture/kp\\_tabby.htm](https://www.nps.gov/timu/learn/historyculture/kp_tabby.htm)). The shells and coquina used will be gathered from black leisure sites post-reconstruction across the U.S. and global south, such as but not limited to Santa Monica, Manhattan Beach, Street beach, and more. The interlocking beds will also be placed upon tabby brick plinths. Tabby is bulletproof by nature.

**Plinth**– The plinth supporting the garden beds will be made of tabby bricks. The bricks will create an alternative to the antebellum bricks lining the Richmond streets harvested from the clay in the James River by enslaved peoples' labor. The plinth is designed to reference a monument, bringing into question who and what survives. But, the abstracted nature of the shape also obscures the expectations of what a monument could be.

**Community Garden** –The garden beds will use the soil from a previous Robert E Lee statue location. A location that is synonymous with white supremacy and extreme violence, but also a location that was reclaimed by the Richmond community as a place of refusal and justice during the 2020 uprisings in Richmond, VA. The soil acts as a living archive, acknowledging the history of the space, while producing changing, evolving, and life-giving matter as a method of



preserving and caring for community and history. The garden provokes upkeep and constant effort for its survival. By placing these gardens on the plinths, we are uplifting care as an essential component of healing.

There will be two different garden beds. Type A: two 10ft x 6ft beds with one 6ftx6ft bed on top and Type B: two 10ft x 6ft beds with one 10ft x 6ft bed on top (reference work samples, Operations\_of\_care\_mock\_up and Garden\_beds\_mock\_up). The four inner beds will be used for the community garden, and the food grown will be determined by the communities needs. The remaining beds will focus on self-sustaining plants and crops that enslaved people planted for their own nourishment and survival in the Americas.

**Plants** – Within the self-sustaining plant beds we will focus on plants that were crucial for the self-liberation of black and enslaved people during escape for freedom and within their own communities post-reconstruction. Judith A. Carney and Richard Nicholas Rosomoff in their book, “In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa’s Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World,” adds, “Plantation slaves and fugitive runaways alike depended on ethnobotanical knowledge for nourishment, healing, and their collective survival.” We will put out a call for the donations of the suggested plants and trees referenced below. Please visit Chapter 5, Surviving off the Land (<http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/fromslaverytofreedom/#chapter5>) and click on the images to read how the plants, trees, herbs, and flora listed below were used by enslaved people for their own nourishment and survival during slavery and post reconstruction.

**Tree suggestions:**

Black Oak, *Quercus tinctoria* – Its bark was the raw material that medicines and remedies were derived. Black oak grew throughout the old Confederate States.

Black Walnut, *Juglans nigra* – The meat from the nut is used as a food, the leaves are used for medicine, oil is pressed from the seeds and the wood is used in construction and furniture making.

Chestnut, *Castanea vesca* – The American chestnut tree produces an edible nut. Eaten raw, roasted or boiled the chestnut was a source of protein.

Sugar Maple, *Acer saccharinum* – The sugar extracted from it is an article of trade and used medicinally also.

**Plant/ herb suggestions for self-sustaining garden beds:**

Yucca / Perennials – yucca, perennials, and resurrection lilies are resilient plants commonly used in older African American and enslaved cemeteries to mark the graves of their loved ones due to the expense of headstones.

Bell Wort, *Uvularia perfoliata* – The roots are cooked and eaten and the young shoots are a very good substitute for asparagus.

Butterfly Weed, Pleurisy root, *Asclepias tuberosa* – The Butterfly Weed is a stimulant that has been used to treat rheumatism, chest ailments, catarrh, and pneumonia.

Dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale* – The plant is edible and has been used like a vegetable, medicine, weed, and food.

Dock root, *Rumex crispus* – Dock is an herbal flower used to make remedies for various ailments and is edible. Dock root is a treatment for itch, syphilis, and as a laxative.

Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca* - The pods produce a silk fiber similar and when woven with cotton is used to make articles of clothing like gloves or socks.

Three-leaved Indian turnip, *Arisaema triphyllum* – It is used as a medicinal remedy to treat inflammation of the mucous membranes, particularly pertussis and asthma.

Wild Lettuce, *Lactuca elongata* - This herb was used as a treatment for menstruation in women. Often runaways would use wild lettuce to control and delay their menstrual cycles.

Wild Senna, *Cassia occidentalis* - Senna was used as a coffee substitute, potherb, salad, seeds roasted and used as coffee often called the derogatory term, "Nigger Coffee."

Wood Violet, *Viola palmate* - Sometimes called wild okra, it was used by the enslaved for making soup. The bruised leaves were used as application to soothe the skin like a lotion.

Bear-grass, *Yucca filamentosa* - The "Cherokee doctors" use it in the form of a poultice of the roots, or a salve, as a local application in allaying inflammation.

**A community gathering place, aka Marcus David Peters Circle** – The center of the space, Marcus David Peters Circle, a name adopted by the community during the 2020 Richmond protests, will be a paved gathering space made of tabby brick. This space will be available for community engagement and activities. In remembrance of the community artwork that was used to reclaim the Lee monument as Marcus Davis Peters Circle, we encourage the community to engage with the paved tabby platform through self expression and the continual creation of art. This space will be in constant evolution, standing in the same location the monument once stood.

**Fostering Care & Black leisure**– By way of a community garden and gathering space, we are challenging the euro-western conception of what it means to memorialize or remain, such as a monument. We are not interested in memorial

qua memorial, or the specularization of black death for general consumption. By subverting the monuments' materials from stone and bronze to soil and tabby –living and natural material linked to resistance and black leisure– the conversation of memorializing pivots to one that serves the community and fosters a sanctuary for nourishment and leisure.

### **Artists Biography:**

**LaRissa Rogers** (b. 1996) is an anti-disciplinary artist based between Virginia and Los Angeles. She holds a BFA in Painting and Printmaking and BIS in International Fashion Buying from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has exhibited work and performed in institutions such as ICOSA in Austin TX, Fields Projects in NY, Welcome Gallery in Charlottesville VA, Target Gallery in Alexandria VA, 1708 Gallery in Richmond VA, Second Street Gallery in Charlottesville VA, The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative in Charlottesville VA, Black Ground in Cali Colombia, W Doha in Qatar, The Fronte Arte Cultura in San Ysidro CA and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Virginia Beach VA. She is the 2021-2022 Visual Arts fellow at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, a 2021-2022 Black Spatial Relics artist in residence, and a 2021-2022 grant recipient of the Black Artists and Designers Guild Creative Futures Grant. She is currently pursuing her MFA in New Genres at the University of California Los Angeles and is currently attending the BEMIS Center of Contemporary Arts Residency.

**Luis Vasquez La Roche** is a Visual artist that resides between Trinidad and Tobago and Virginia. They hold an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. They have exhibited work and performed in institutions such as Field Projects (NY), Deakin University (Australia), La Vulcanizadora (Colombia), Black Ground (Colombia), Second Street Gallery (VA), International Development Bank (DC),



Alice Yard (Trinidad and Tobago), University of Chicago (IL), LACE (CA), AIR gallery (NY), Fresh Milk (Barbados), The Carr Center (MI), the ICA (VA) and the upcoming Documenta 15 in Germany. They were selected for OAZO AIR in The Netherlands (2013), Beta Local's Itinerant Seminar in Puerto Rico (2016), Mare Residency in Puerto Rico (2021), Mar de Islas performance encounter in Puerto Rico (2021), Visible Records Airstream in Virginia (2022) and an upcoming residency at Documenta 15 in Germany (2022). They were the recipient of the Fulbright scholarship in 2018. They are an Assistant professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

## Previous Works:



On Belonging - LaRissa Rogers

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OfXQbpW4RX5-OML1sz7ad6VdnJplPqmc/view?usp=sharing>



Poetic Living - LaRissa Rogers

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b\\_jaqZ6APMTHMLZUKVZsfWn2E7z-Z8\\_K/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b_jaqZ6APMTHMLZUKVZsfWn2E7z-Z8_K/view?usp=sharing)



The Impossibility - Luis Vasquez

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iz4r7kq6iP2vPlb3pXNMrtvkxlnzM8c/view?usp=sharing>

How does 'Operations of Care' relate to the artist's Practices? – Monumentality, archives, labor, leisure, temporality, and care in the afterlives of slavery are at the core of both artists' practices.

Rogers uses soil as a living archive to think through residence time, space and place-making, migration, healing, and growth. In a Poetic of living, she proposes new methods of memorializing by using her body made from soil and placing them in the soil from Pen Park and Farmington Country Club, two locations that are linked to past and present traumas and erasure. She places the soil body back in the earth, as an alternative monument that is made of our ancestors. One that grows life while seemingly unable to do so. Celosia, a plant native to East Africa and presumed to be brought over during the transatlantic slave trade along with fungus are then grown on the soil bodies. Through the eventual disintegration of the soil bodies, only the celosia and plants will remain. In this gesture, she asks the audience to consider systems of labor and loss enacted on the body as well as the food, plants, and knowledge transferred by enslaved people that has given root to what we see and know of beauty, intellect, technologies, and the sustenance we eat today.

In *On Belonging: The space in between* she punctuates the importance of place, belonging, and care through excavating the hidden histories embedded in the land as a means of regeneration, possibility, and growth. Rogers builds installations that pay homage to the interconnected histories in the soil and land from which they are created, to explore the dual nature of flight and migration as a means of survival and self-preservation, speaking particularly to diasporic resilience. In relation to core samples as the root of the Earth, the layers of the soil slabs and stratification of the sugar represent the components of the histories and shared experiences that our society is built upon. Rogers



juxtaposes a myriad of imagery within her work--historical, personal, and current day events--to relate not only the duality of identity and hybridity of our histories, but also the similarities of past and present societal structures such as the plantation system, sports, capitalism, patriarchy, commodification, and labor. The proximity of this imagery draws micro-and macro-parallels in the cyclical effect of the personal, relating to and affecting the larger world experience. As slavery's ongoing past continues to inform the present, her work recontextualizes these histories to articulate ideas surrounding identity, race, care, resistance, and resilience.

In *The Impossibility*, Vasquez La Roche uses Palm oil, gunpowder and lemon juice to create body casts that will eventually melt over 1400 bricks. Enslavers poured this substance over enslaved people to cover bruises and marks before selling them. Layered with the history of this material is also the complex history of brick making in the US, where enslaved people would harvest clay from the James River to make bricks. Based on the research, Vasquez La Roche created a monument where the casts would lay on top of one another to impart the sense of a pile of bodies. Eventually, these palm oil body casts melt and disappear. The base made of 1000-1400 bricks is the only thing that would remain, giving the sense of a removed monument. Ancarrow's Landing, located at the beginning of the Richmond Slave Trail, wrestles with a violent history. Presently this space is used as a site for fishing, walking and biking. This longevity of this work tries to collapse all this space's present and past histories. The only visible reminder of this work is the brown dried spot where the bricks stood.

**From:** Dandridge, Alex - PDR  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 6, 2022 9:50 AM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Subject:** FW: Lee Circle renaming

Public comment

**From:** David Rennolds [<mailto:d.rennolds@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 5, 2022 1:36 PM  
**To:** [pdrplanningandpreservation@rva.com](mailto:pdrplanningandpreservation@rva.com)  
**Cc:** Dandridge, Alex - PDR <[Alex.Dandridge@rva.gov](mailto:Alex.Dandridge@rva.gov)>  
**Subject:** Lee Circle renaming

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Hey Alex and Urban Design Committee,

I saw the article on the redoing of the Lee Circle. I think that circle should be a monument dedicated to Forgiveness, something we all need to be more diligent about, and especially at a time like this. Forgiveness is one of the most important attributes of living in a civilized society such as ours hopefully strives to be...

Thanks, David Rennolds long time Richmond resident.

## Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

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**From:** Coleen Rodriguez <coleen.rodriguez@joynerfineproperties.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 6, 2022 9:42 PM  
**To:** Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Cc:** Philipsen, Sven J. - City Council; Jordan, Katherine - City Council  
**Subject:** Allen Avenue Circle Landscaping Plan

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Katherine, Sven and Mr. Roakes,

I have reviewed the landscaping plan for the circle at Allen and Monument Avenues. I have no problem with the proposed flowers and trees as a temporary installation, although multi-trunk trees seem to decrease visibility in the already dangerous intersection. I think the more important issue is how the city will enforce the laws and regulations about city right-of-ways. The news coverage seems to be highlighting the upcoming return of a public gathering space in the traffic circle. Will the temporary plan address communication using signage or otherwise of whether or when people can gather in this space?

Thank you,

Coleen Butler Rodriguez

## Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

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**From:** Jordan, Katherine - City Council  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 8, 2022 7:37 AM  
**To:** Shima Grover  
**Cc:** CityWebManager; Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR  
**Subject:** Re: Lee Circle Landscaping Plan Phone:N/A

Thank you. Passing this along to the planner in charge

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 6, 2022, at 10:15 PM, Shima Grover <shimagro@gmail.com> wrote:

From: Shima Grover

Email Address: shimagro@gmail.com

Mail Address: 2956 Hathaway Rd., #811  
Richmond, VA 23225

Message:

Dear Ms. Jordan, Please read my letter before you vote on the Lee Circle landscaping project. I do not live in your district, but my experience may influence your vote. I chair a committee of Richmond Tennis Association that takes care of plants around Arthur Ashe statue. RTA started to weed, prune, fertilize, plant etc. about 5 years ago after a complaint was published in Richmond Times Dispatch. The complaint was that the landscaping was overgrown with weeds. The first time we removed weeds, we uncovered a steel plate covering a small chamber that housed water line. After 5 years of asking, there is no water source at the statue. A neighbor was kind enough to let us use their outdoor faucet to water the landscape but there is a limit to how much we can water using a bucket. The plants are in terrible condition now because we have not been able to water them sufficiently. When the statue was landscaped in 1998, a \$10,000 donation was presented to the City for maintenance including the installation of water line. The line is there, but no one from the City has been able to make the line deliver water to the statue. If you look at the intersection where Maury statue used to stand, the City planted ornamental grass, etc. If you drive by tomorrow, plants look dry and do not look great. I also looked after some of tennis courts the City owned and found the same pattern. Courts are built but not maintained. I hate to see the City spend \$100,000 for landscaping if Lee Circle is not going to be maintained. Perhaps hardscape that does not need to be maintained is a better choice. Regards. Shima Grover (Ms.) .

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Mr. Andrea Quilici & Mr. Raymond Roakes  
Urban Design Committee  
City of Richmond  
900 E. Broad St., Room 510  
Richmond, VA 23219

Planning Commission  
900 E. Broad St., Room 511  
Richmond, VA 23219

20 September 2022

Dear Mr. Roakes, Mr. Quilici, and the Planning Commission:

I just studied the revised plan for the traffic circle at Monument and Allen, referred to as Lee Circle or Marcus-David Peters Circle. I wanted to voice one concern.

The planting within the inner mulch ring is designed in such a way that disrupts or discourages a public gathering. While this might be intentional or desired by some, the fact that this circle became a vibrant and important public gathering space during the summer of 2020 should not be overlooked. For the first time in my experience in Richmond, that circle was activated, energized, and elevated.

I hope the potential for it to be a space for civic energy is retained and celebrated in whatever is developed. The preservation of civil discourse and speech should be exulted at every level of our democracy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RBV', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roberto Ventura, LEED AP  
NCIDQ Certificate Number - 29194  
Chair and Associate Professor  
Department of Interior Design  
Virginia Commonwealth University

**From:** [julia.seward](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [Rebecca Keller](#)  
**Subject:** today Planning Commission - Lee Circle  
**Date:** Monday, October 3, 2022 9:57:46 AM

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Thanks for your information:

Email: To Planning Commission

The Fan District Association supports the MAPS letter to the Planning Commission. Perspectives of citizens who live around the Circle provide critical on-the-ground insight and experience as the future of the Circle unfolds.

Rebecca Keller

**From:** [PDR Land Use Admin](#)  
**To:** [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Lee Circle Temporary Landscaping/Re-opening Plans  
**Date:** Monday, October 3, 2022 9:30:18 AM

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**From:** Steve Nuckolls [mailto:steve@stevenuckolls.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 3, 2022 9:03 AM  
**To:** PDR Land Use Admin <PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov>  
**Cc:** Janice Hall Nuckolls <janice@tada-studio.com>  
**Subject:** Lee Circle Temporary Landscaping/Re-opening Plans

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Planning Commission Members,

As long-time (over 28 years) immediately-adjacent neighbors to the Lee Circle, we have reviewed the temporary landscaping plans and see no concerns other than the proposed mulch paths. We think it's fine if the paths are only used for maintenance; otherwise, we feel these will be inviting to pedestrians, which is a recipe for disaster at such a busy and dangerous **traffic circle**. Through the years, the number of calls to the Department of Emergency Communications pales in comparison to the actual number of traffic incidents at the circle, as there have been numerous hit-and-runs that went unreported. Virtually no one yields the clearly-marked pedestrian right-of-way, the speeding is atrocious (especially with wet pavement), and we often witness cars even driving the wrong way around the circle! Even the existing security fence was recently struck by an out-of-control automobile.

We strongly disagree with the UDC recommendation to immediately remove the fence and barricades and re-open the circle. There are numerous folks who desire to turn the circle into a de-facto public square, bring their bullhorns/amplified equipment and loudly express their opinions, organize protests, etc. While we certainly support the First Amendment, this disruptive use should not be allowed to be inserted into a residential neighborhood. And who will police the subject matter that is promoted within the circle? What if groups want to honor police that have lost their lives in the line of duty? The circle was not designed as a community gathering spot, has never been used for that and should not be allowed to now.

Thanks for your consideration of our wishes. We are just trying to do our best to maintain the quality of life in our residential neighborhood and the city in general. Feel free to contact us if you'd like to discuss further. Thanks.

Steve & Janice Nuckolls  
1815 Monument Ave  
Richmond, VA 23220