

Parks and Recreation American Rescue Plan Frequently Asked Questions

How were the sites selected and prioritized?

Sites were selected based on multiple factors including the number of individuals served, investment in underserved communities and creating equitable access to city programs and services, geographical location with walkability (approximately 100k in multi districts, etc)

- **T.B. Smith Community Center (8th District):**
 - 21% Hispanic
 - Currently serves 20,000 from both the 6th and 8th Districts
 - No new center since the annexation in the 1970's
 - Connected to Southside Plaza, a high school, and the James River Park System through several trails.
- **Church Hill located at Lucks Field (7th District):**
 - Can serve approximately 35,000 residents from the 6th and 7th Districts
 - Walkable from nine different parks and neighborhoods
- **Southside Community Center (9th District):**
 - Can serve approximately 25,000 residents from the 4th, 8th, and 9th Districts.
 - First new build in more than 30 years.
 - Will be the first community center located within the 9th District
- **Calhoun Center/ Gilpin Pool (3rd District):**
 - Can serve approximately 43,000 residents from 2nd, 3rd, and 6th Districts
 - Renovations to the aging center will bring state of the art recreation and community amenities.
- **James River Branch Trail:**
 - Will connect TB Smith to the James River Park System, Southside Plaza, a high school, etc.
 - Will connect employment, shopping, schools, and other neighborhood facilities.
 - Safe transportation opportunities
 - Gives recreation access and green space in an area where these are currently limited.
 - 12 year interest – based on a concept plan from 2009
 - This project is included in the 2019 James River Park System Master Plan and the 2020 Richmond 300 Master Plan
- **Reedy Creek Bridge:**
 - Creates expanded access between Crooked Branch and Forest Hill
 - Connectivity from high school to Forest Hill to James River Park System
 - Assist in use of a 20 acre natural park adjacent to high school.
- **Texas Beach Tower:**
 - Immediate safety repairs needed (supports, walkway, stairs)
 - Public access connector to northside of James River

Where is the North Bank/Texas Beach Tower?

- This is the primary access point to the James River from the north central side of the James River Park System. It is located off of Texas Avenue with a small parking lot. The entrance to the tower is located along Northbank Trail.

What is Northbank/Texas Beach Tower?

- There are several Tower and Bridges that provide access to the James River from parking lots and roadways surrounding the James River Park System. Most of them were constructed to safely traverse active railroads that encompass large portions of the James River on the north and south sides. The towers are mostly constructed of steel and concrete with an elevated pathway over the railroad tracks and a stair set that leads to park property usually close the banks of the James River. Other locations include 21st Tower and 42nd Tower off of Riverside Drive and near the T.Tyler Potterfield Bridge.
- The Northbank/Texas Beach Tower also provides access to over 100,000 visitors per year, according to the trail counter located on the tower.

How will the ARPA dollars support the James River Park System (JRPS) Master Plan?

- Within the James River Park System Master Plan, through many surveys and public meetings, park users responded to the section of top priorities under park buildings, that maintaining park structures as the second priority just below restoring Pump House Park. This location also supports the farthest western access of the north bank of the James River in the city of Richmond. All other locations upriver are privately held or secure facilities.

Why does it need repairs?

- As part of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities' ongoing efforts to create safe access to areas of the James River Park System, park management contracted out a bridge and tower inspection of the Northbank/Texas Beach Tower by Whitman, Requardt and Associates. Repairs were identified and now funding is available to ensure continued safe access to the James River Park System.

What is Crooked Branch Ravine Bridge and how does it support the James River Park System (JRPS) Master Plan?

- The Crooked Branch Ravine Bridge and new trail through the Park would provide an important multi-modal transportation connection between Forest Hill Park and Crutchfield St. This connection would offer a safe bicycle and pedestrian route connecting the Swansboro West, Westover and other south side neighborhoods, as well as George Wythe High School, to the James River Park System. This is a critical part of the Reedy Creek Greenway which is identified in both the JRPS Master Plan and the Richmond 300 Plan as a priority project.

What is the James River Branch Trail and how does it support the James River Park System (JRPS) Master Plan?

- The James River Branch Rail Trail is an approximately 2.5 mile long abandoned CSX rail corridor. This corridor runs northwest to southeast from north of Midlothian Turnpike to near

Cofer Road. When constructed, this trail would provide excellent access for all of south side for both recreational and transportation purposes.

Why is connectivity to the James River Park System (JRPS) important?

- Multi-modal access to the JRPS from most every neighborhood south of the river is difficult. Both of these projects would provide tremendous benefits, for both recreational and transportation purposes, to a large number of people. In addition, parking in the JRPS is extremely limited. These projects would make it much easier for people to access the JRPS without having to depend on a car to get there.
- These proposed improvements to the James River Parks System will connect thousands of Richmond families and reduce our carbon footprint by creating multi-model paths and lessen our need for vehicle transportation.

What positive impacts will these projects have on residents and neighborhoods in these areas?

- Provide neighborhood access to other city services
- Provide direct, walkable access to parks and green spaces
- Provide recreation opportunities to support the surrounding community
- Provide new/upgraded facilities with amenities specific to the surrounding community
- Provide connections to employment, shopping and schools
- Provide access to safe transportation opportunities
- Potential increase to property values.

How will the facilities and services be funded after the initial ARPA investment?

- Facilities and services will be funded through the City of Richmond annual operating and capital budgets.

How/when will other park projects be addressed?

- PRCF will use the Richmond 300 Master Plan as the guiding template for other park projects. Those that can be completed using the Capital Improvement Budget will be completed as soon as possible.

What types of facilities/amenities will be included in the community centers?

- Amenities within the new community centers would be based on community input and prioritization.

How can we receive updated/more information regarding ARPA projects?

- Further information can be found on the City of Richmond website located at www.rva.gov/arp.

How can these projects help with the climate emergency recently declared by the City Council?

- The additional land acquisition will help our department acquire parcels critical to cooling heat island areas of our city and our new facilities will be built with green infrastructure principle.

What does the master plan for PRCF do?

- As recommended by the Richmond 300 Master Plan, \$500,000 will be allocated as part of this plan for the creation of a Parks master plan, which will guide operations, expansion, maintenance, capital projects and strategic direction for the next 10-20 years.

What is the “[10 Minute Walk to a Park](#)” initiative?

- A national movement made possible by the National Recreation and Parks Association, The Trust for Public Land, and the Urban Land Institute, assists in increasing access to green spaces and public parks by 2050. The City of Richmond has signed this pledge and [announced new green](#) spaces in the 8th and 9th Districts in 2020.
- The ARP funding would allow for additional green space acquisition to close the 10-minute walk to a park gap that exists in some of our communities.