The James River corridor is widely recognized as a focal point within the City of Richmond’s public and open space system. In order to preserve and enhance the river corridor, the City has adopted policies, which provide guidance for ongoing improvements to public recreational facilities and for the protection of natural resources.

This document summarizes those policies and recommendations related to the James River that are contained within the Richmond Master Plan 2000-2020 and the Richmond Downtown Plan. This document serves as a general reference. The chapters referenced in this summary are listed next to each section heading. For more detailed information, including land use recommendations along the corridor, please refer to the complete Richmond Master Plan 2000-2020 and Richmond Downtown Plan (both available online at www.richmondgov.com).

Public Access, Stewardship, and Opportunities

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Far West Planning District (Master Plan-Ch. 11)
-Physical improvements to the City's Water Filtration Plant at the southern terminus of Douglasdale Road should incorporate a public access point to the James River.
-Williams Island should be added to the James River Park System. It should be maintained in its natural state, with no active recreational uses.

Huguenot Planning District (Master Plan-Ch. 11)
-A greenway connection between the park system in the Old South District and the park system in the Huguenot District should be developed; a trail under Powhite Parkway would address a portion of this link.

Near West Planning District (Master Plan-Ch. 11)
-Develop the west canal segment between Tredegar Iron Works and Maymont Park (and eventually further west) for park and recreation use.

Downtown Planning District (Downtown Plan-Ch. 3)
-Provide continuous public access along the canals or riverfront.
-Incorporate public access to the river into the redevelopment of Mayo's Island.

Riverfront Development Agreement
As part of the restoration of the historic canal system in Downtown Richmond, the City of Richmond entered into a development agreement in 1994 with private property owners along the canal corridor. Property covenants included in the agreement now guide the use and design of the sites and buildings along the corridor. The covenants are intended to promote pedestrian activity along the canal, preserve views to the river and encourage the adaptive reuse of historic structures. An architectural review board, which is comprised of property owners and City representatives, evaluates all development proposals for sites covered by the agreement.

East Planning District (Master Plan-Ch. 11)
-Any development along the edge of the James River, west of the CSX trestle, should ensure continuous public access along the river and accommodate tour boat access.
-Future park expansion should include portions of the western half of Chapel Island into Great Ship Lock Park.
-Future park expansion should include an extension of the Canal Walk east to the City limits.
-Future park expansion should include a continuous public park linkage from Great Ship Lock Park to Gillies Creek Park.

East Planning District (Master Plan-Ch. 11)
-Future park expansion should include a linear park along the west side of the James River between Ancarrow's Landing and the Port of Richmond Terminal in the Broad Rock and Old South Planning Districts.
-Expand the Floodwall walk east from the Mayo Bridge to Ancarrow's Landing and incorporate the Slave Trail areas west into the James River Park at Cowardin Avenue.
-Develop a community-oriented park in Old Manchester with a linear greenway connector north to the James River.