



BridgePark

Inquiries:

Richmond BridgePark Foundation: Ted Elmore ted@bridgeparkrva.com

Spatial Affairs Bureau: spencer@spatialaffairsbureau.com

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Richmond VA

Richmond BridgePark unveils concept designs for a major downtown linear park that would reconnect communities and establish key points of access to the historic falls of the James River

Education programming advances along with the Park

Upon completion of the Foundation's latest stage of planning, the BridgePark initiative has expanded from its original aim to create a park-like river crossing to become a two-mile-long pedestrian and cycle urban connectivity greenway. The proposed City-level linear park system will connect the central business district, the seats of city and state government, and VCU's world-class Medical Center campus in the north, to the fine grain streets of the historic and rapidly changing communities of the City's South Side. Dramatic views of the historic falls of the James River, including the ruins of a railroad bridge - burned at the conclusion of the American Civil War - would be the centerpiece of the park experience.

The project ties many east-west urban initiatives together - such as the city's new PULSE high-speed rapid bus network - via a system of interconnected parks, event spaces and public art opportunities along an important north-south spine and seeks to prompt further complementary development and connectivity beyond the boundaries of the project.

At its widest-scale, BridgePark aims to reconnect communities that were separated from the City Center by a series of mid-century infrastructure projects.

One key aspect of the concept is to create a riparian forest gradient overlay on currently barren and oversized highways, composed to frame further 'cultural vegetation' strategies with plants that represent the diverse human and wildlife communities that have been crucial to the history of the city and nation within the project's catchment area. In terms of territory, the project looks to repurpose existing oversized vehicular infrastructure for non-vehicular use, including forming a bicycle 'superhighway' from an underused median on one of the city's bridges.

BridgePark Foundation President, Ted Elmore, states, "Richmond has such a wealth of historical and natural resources, with the beautiful James River at the heart of it all. We are thrilled to work with the community and this extraordinarily accomplished team in examining our past and envisioning monuments to our future. The popularity of newly achieved river initiatives, such as The Potterfield Bridge, coupled with exciting projects pending downtown make now an ideal time for us to contribute a bold vision to our City."

Spatial Affairs Bureau director, Peter Culley, notes, "we are at a very exciting stage in what is an appropriately ambitious project taking its place as part of Richmond's impressive renaissance as a river city with important histories now ready to be re-examined. As cars begin to take a second place in our cities, human stories and experiences can appropriately move up to the front of the line."

This next stage of work comes as a result of BridgePark's successful ongoing private fundraising campaign and follows an extensive community engagement process over a six-year period, including an ideas study completed by Spatial Affairs Bureau in 2015.

BridgePark is now moving towards a process to include the initiative in the city's development plans, including undertaking a series of workshops with various city departments and community stakeholders as a first step.

The non-profit Foundation's robust educational programming will continue as well. The community's young people follow the project's advancement, with each new planning stage providing a new chapter of curriculum. To date, BridgePark programs have included over 1,500 students and educators, throughout the region.

"Students have such a verve for bold ideas. We believe modeling this level of ambition with our young people is essential," shared Elmore.

Spatial Affairs Bureau is working with Buro Happold New York on structural and economic impact studies, Sam Schwartz Engineering on pedestrian / cycle / vehicular strategies, Timmons Group for civil engineering and Gardiner and Theobald USA for a headline costing plan. A 28' long physical architectural model designed and built by the Spatial Affairs' team in conjunction with VCU students and other creatives in the Richmond community is currently on traveling exhibition at various sites around Richmond and the wider community.

Richmond, VA city mayor, Levar Stoney, and senior members of the planning and economic development teams at the City have recently been briefed on the proposals.

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Richmond BridgePark Foundation is a Virginia non-stock corporation and registered 501(c)(3) organization. The Foundation recently opened offices in Riverfront Plaza downtown, where they display a scale model of the proposed site. The office regularly receives community leaders and student groups to learn more about the project and engage in educational programming around architecture, design, planning, and ideation.

BridgePark is led by president, Ted Elmore, former partner at Hunton & Williams LLP, who left the partnership to dedicate his time to the project.

Foundation offices are located at 901 E Byrd St, Suite 100, Richmond, VA 23219.

www.bridgeparkva.com.

Spatial Affairs Bureau is an award-winning architecture, design and landscape firm led by Peter Culley with offices in Richmond, Los Angeles and London. Recent projects include the 1.5 million square foot Crosstown Concourse masterplan and Crosstown Arts complex in Memphis, architecture and site furnishings for the Metropolitan Museum's 5th Avenue Plaza, Great Hall and Met Breuer Lobby in New York, and ongoing work for top advertising firm TBWA\Chiat\Day in Los Angeles. Before starting Spatial Affairs Bureau, Peter Culley, as associate director for Rick Mather Architects, was the project architect for Richmond's VMFA expansion by Rick Mather + SMBW.

www.spatialaffairsbureau.com

Buro Happold is an international integrated engineering firm operating in 23 locations worldwide, with over 50 partners and 1,800 employees including some of the world's leading consulting engineers. Projects include Zaha Hadid's City of Dreams Development in Macau, London's Olympic Park, The High Line in NY, O2 Arena in London, and Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

www.burohappold.com

Sam Schwartz is a leading traffic and transportation planning and engineering firm specializing in developing context-sensitive transportation solutions for government, private-sector, not-for-profit, and community clients and strives to balance the needs and improve the quality of life for all users, including drivers, pedestrians, transit riders, and cyclists. The organization has been a pivotal player in some of the most significant multi-modal transport rethinks in the United States and beyond.

www.samschwartz.com

Gardiner and Theobald is an independent construction and property consultancy working across all sectors of the built environment, focussing on minimising risk and creating opportunities to maximise the value of developments and property assets. They provide cost management, project management and schedule control for projects in public and private sectors and have been instrumental in understanding cost and project management issues for numerous public initiatives including Brooklyn Bridge Park in New York.

www.gardiner.com

Timmons Group is a multi-disciplined engineering and technology firm founded in Richmond, Virginia and recognized for nearly twenty years as one of Engineering News Record's Top 500 Design Firms in the United States. Representative Richmond projects include The Capital Trail, Bon Secours Washington Redskins Training Center, Belle Isle, Stone Brewing's East Coast Facility, and Dominion Workplace Project.

www.timmons.com