

BROWN'S ISLAND IMPROVEMENT PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

The design team acknowledges the tremendous amount of work that preceded this current planning effort. Hargreaves & Associates’ 2012 Richmond Riverfront Plan provided the design team with an enormous amount of information and data that has served as a benchmark for this current improvement plan. Many of the concepts from that plan are reflected in this document in some form.

The team at Venture Richmond provided considerable feedback and detailed logistical information about how they currently utilize Brown’s Island and also connected us to a variety of vendors, event organizers, and community groups that use Brown’s Island throughout the year. We are also very appreciative of the time and input given to this endeavor by various City of Richmond representatives, local business partners, non-profit leaders, and others from the community who were invited to participate in the IQ Charrette.

With the opening of T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge in 2016, and the ongoing success of events like the The Richmond Folk Festival, Brown’s Island is continuing to see more and more visitors taking advantage of its unique riverfront location.

The purpose of this improvement plan document is to highlight potential improvement projects for Brown’s Island - at a range of scales - that can be championed by Venture Richmond and others to help make Brown’s Island an even better event and festival venue while also fully realizing its potential as a thriving urban park that engages and appeals to all Richmonders.



Since Brown’s Island is a public park any improvement project in this plan would need additional design exploration and would be taken through the appropriate City of Richmond public review processes including review by the Urban Design Committee, Planning Commission, and others to ensure that the design reflects the City and community’s vision for Brown’s Island.

This booklet begins with the documentation of the Intangible Qualities Process that was the first step in creating the improvement plan. This process included existing condition documentation and historical research, a design charrette, and the formulation of broad guiding themes for Brown’s Island with some specific examples of how those themes could be applied in the design process.

Next, Brown’s Island was imagined into seven key areas highlighted in the Projects and Strategies chapter: Front Porch, The Clearing, The Point, Great Lawn, Back Porch, Haxall Gardens, and Sturgeon Cove. Each of these areas has a detailed spread in the document showing proposed projects, inspiration imagery, and precedent project information. Projects in each area range from small improvements and programming suggestions up to large and complex capital improvement projects.

An over-arching goal of the plan is to increase visitor engagement by creating multiple new unique destinations and experiences on the island while also improving accessibility, visitor comfort, and event logistics. These suggestions are outlined in more detail in the Programming chapter of this plan.

As the main vehicular way adjacent to Brown’s Island, Tredegar Street’s design is important to the function of the island. While specific design proposals for Tredegar St. are out of the scope of this study general suggestions for improving pedestrian connectivity and safety are included. The last chapter of this plan makes proposals for Tredegar Street.

The Appendix is currently home to ROM cost estimates for each area of the improvement plan and that show various projects broken down into small, medium, and large anticipated cost categories. These estimates are helpful to provide an overview of the range of proposed improvements and can guide prioritization.

VENTURE RICHMOND

We engage business and community leaders in partnering with the city to enhance the vitality of the community, particularly downtown, through economic development, marketing, promotion, advocacy and events.

Our services in downtown extend from marketing and programming to economic development and beautification. We engage daily with businesses, community leaders and consumers in an effort to increase activity throughout downtown while also producing world-class events and managing the riverfront.

3NORTH

Founded in 1999, 3north is an award-winning design practice with studios located in Richmond, Virginia and San Francisco, California. 3north is a Unified Design Studio. Our highly collaborative approach lies in the breadth of perspectives brought by its combined staff of architects, landscape architects, and interior designers, who work across disciplines toward an integrated project vision.

3north’s work is characterized by the richness and diversity that results when design solutions find genuine inspiration in client goals and the unique site and cultural context specific to each project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BROWN’S ISLAND | IMPROVEMENT PLAN | SEPTEMBER 2019



RICHMOND'S FRONT PORCH

A PLACE TO SEE AND BE SEEN



- A social hub for Richmond
- Making memories
- A magnetic place that draws people in with activity
- 'Instagrammable' features and experiences
- Unique seating opportunities
- Elevation changes and dynamic landscape
- Elements that draws people in – visual+sound
- Interactive features
- Art and innovative lighting
- Customizable features and spaces
- Memorable and unique

A CULTURAL NEXUS

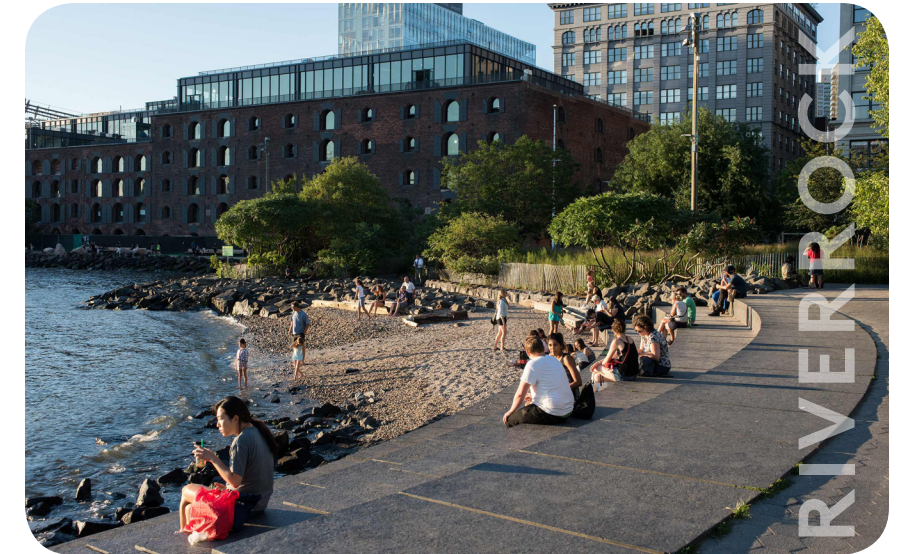
A PLACE FOR CONNECTION



- A venue for events of all sizes
- Both a downtown destination and a departure point to other adventures
- Educational opportunities related to history, nature, recreation, and art
- Kinetic energy of river, canal, trails, railroad
- Destination for locals and tourists alike
- Informal gathering spaces and viewing locations
- Connections to surrounding history and cultural sites
- Comfortable and thoughtful

FOUR SEASONS OF THE JAMES

A PLACE OF WATER AND WONDER



- Showcase and celebrate natural systems
- Provide a variety of river and canal experiences
- Celebrating the James River's recreational opportunities
- Natural materials: boulders, wood
- Materials that age and change over time
- Experiences and plantings that highlight seasons
- Flexible spaces and features
- Make the river and canal highly visible while maintaining a sense of discovery
- Ephemeral and timeless

DELIVERABLES THEMES

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AREA MAP

A FRONT PORCH

- 01 Potterfield Balconies
- 02 Canal Terraces
- 03 The Mill
- 04 Island Square

B CLEARING

- 05 Emancipation Monument
- 06 Repurposed Helipad
- 07 Hammock Woods

C THE POINT

- 08 Central Stair
- 09 The Spring
- 10 Shade Features

D GREAT LAWN

- 11 Central Event Lawn
- 12 River Terraces and Trail
- 13 Signature Art
- 14 Stage Area
- 15 Esplanade

E BACK PORCH

- 16 Flexible Programming
- 17 Support Buildings
- 18 Pipeline Terraces and Improved Path

F HAXALL GARDENS

- 19 The Nest
- 20 Canal Dock
- 21 Canal Art
- 22 New ADA Path to 7th St. Bridge Landing

G STURGEON COVE

- 23 River Pavilion
- 24 The Launch
- 25 Nature Play
- 26 Bayscapes Garden



BROWN'S ISLAND AREA MAP

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IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
FRONT PORCH

This area of Brown’s Island is called The Front Porch because as the island’s most active and visible entry point it’s welcoming character sets the stage for the rest of the island and invites visitors to come in and spend some time. Since the opening of the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge (T.Pott.) this end of Brown’s Island has seen a significant amount of new visitors and the Front Porch region will capitalize on that exposure and activit.

Many of the improvements in this area take cues from suggested projects in the City of Richmond’s Riverfront Plan including projects such as the Canal Terraces. Improvements also seek to expand and build on the design of the T.Pott. including improved ADA access and features that allow visitors to see and experience the James River as much as possible.

Since the focus here is on welcoming visitors and providing experiences and services that encourage them to stay on the island improvements such as vendors (including food and beverage, recreation equipment rentals, etc.) restrooms, information kiosks, wayfinding signage, drinking fountains, and flexible seating opportunities can be found in The Front Porch.

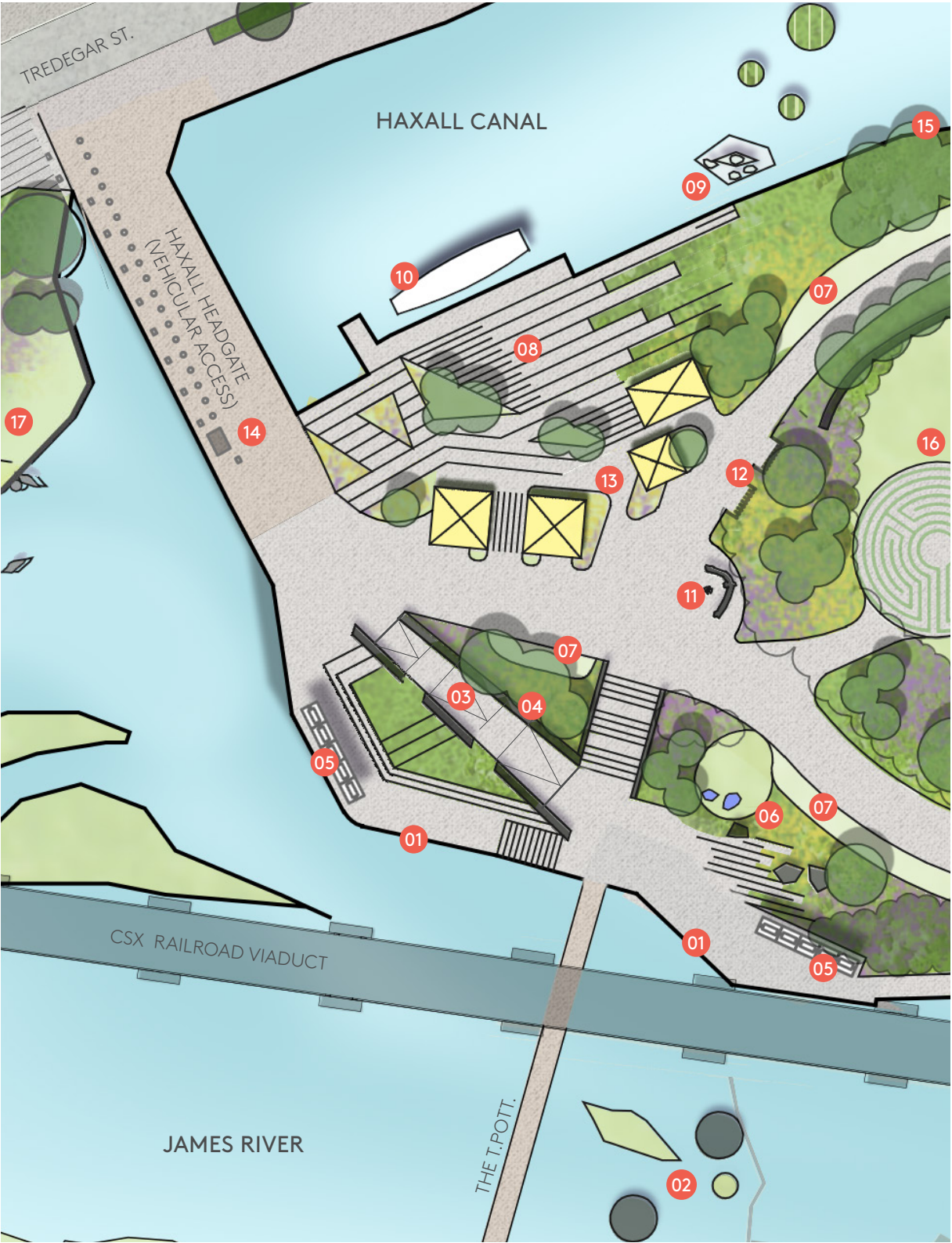
EXISTING CONDITIONS



View looking east/northeast



View looking east during an event



SITE PLAN ENLARGEMENT - NTS

KEY FEATURES

- 01 **Potterfield Balconies** - cantilevered balconies on either side of the T.Pott. entrance for enhanced river viewing opportunities
- 02 **Paddling Feature** - a built river play feature for paddlers in the area around the existing dam break
- 03 **Sloped Plaza** - ADA access to the T.Pott that seamlessly integrates into a terraced lawn seating area for additional views of the river
- 04 **T.Pott. Signage** - relocation of the existing T.Pott. sign to the face of the sloped plaza wall, design will incorporate salvaged material from existing industrial machinery
- 05 **Trellis Swings** - facing the river
- 06 **Art or Natural Play Feature**
- 07 **Layby Areas** - reinforced paving material areas for vehicle pull-off, porta potties, and vendor space during events
- 08 **Canal Terraces** - seating terraces with integrated plantings, design would include ADA access down to the canal as well as a sloped path for watercraft and maintenance access
- 09 **Headman Sculpture** - suggestion to relocate this art piece to be installed in the canal or adjacent to it
- 10 **Bateau Historic Exhibit**
- 11 **Existing Mill Sculpture to Remain**
- 12 **Bicycle Racks** (2 clusters of 10)
- 13 **Island Square** - cluster of small building that can house vendors, permanent restrooms, support space for programs, outdoor seating, and various visitor comfort features (see pg 64)
- 14 **Haxall Headgate** - removal of non-functional relics/machinery will create space for a safer pedestrian accessway along with new wayfinding signage
- 15 **Haxall Gardens** (see pg 58)
- 16 **The Clearing** (see pg 50)
- 17 **Sturgeon Cove** (see pg 60)

KEY MAP



PRECEDENTS

FRONT PORCH

Bryant Park Winter Village, New York, New York



Clusters of small buildings are envisioned in Island Square

Smale Riverfront Park, Cincinnati, Ohio



Trellis swings facing the river along either side of the T.Pott.

Klyde Warren Park, Dallas, Texas



Gateway markers to enhance entryways

Mortensen Riverfront Plaza, Hartford, Connecticut



Daily food and beverage options programmed into the park

CityDeck, Downtown Green Bay, Wisconsin



Balconies to get visitors closer to the river to watch activities

Canal Terraces, Siegen, Germany



Terraces with integrated landscaping along the Haxall Canal

FRONT PORCH

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IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
THE CLEARING

This area of Brown’s Island is called The Clearing because it’s intended to feel like it was carved out of the island’s tree canopy (that existed historically). Giving this space an identity and unique features allows it to be its own venue for smaller events, and a fun and flexible programmed space for every day park visitors offering a different experience from The Great Lawn. This space and its trees also help provide some physical separation and visual breathing room around the planned Emancipation Monument.

Minor grading changes and the addition of a retaining wall help ensure this space remains functional for events, whether for self contained events or as expansion area for The Great Lawn. The trees selected to surround The Clearing will be tall enough and properly pruned so as not to interfere with service vehicles. Unique seating and art features are located around the perimeter of the space in the landscaped areas in order to keep the center space open and flexible for programming.

The existing helipad could be modified with a painted mural or changed into a labyrinth while still functioning as a hardscape area for events.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



View of helipad area looking east



View from existing path looking southeast



SITE PLAN ENLARGEMENT - NTS

KEY FEATURES

- 01 **Emancipation Monument Plaza** - the new Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument is expected to be completed in 2020 and includes sculptures and a hardscape plaza surrounded by native landscaping and spring flowering trees
- 02 **Helipad Labyrinth** - the helipad can be repurposed into an interactive art feature such as a labyrinth while still maintaining its ability to be used as a paved staging area for events
- 03 **Retaining Wall** - a low retaining wall (estimated to be from 18"-30" in height) helps create a level lawn area for improved tent usage for events
- 04 **Windbreak** - at the base of the retaining wall large specimen trees are planted to create a sense of enclosure for the lawn area, the specific tree species would be selected to ensure vehicular clearances along the pathway
- 05 **Hammock Woods**- landscaped areas around the edges of The Clearing (either side of the Helipad Labyrinth) where dynamic seating opportunities such as hammocks would be located among the trees along with festive lighting features
- 06 **Lawn Area** - level lawn area for programming
- 07 **Art or Natural Play Feature**
- 08 **Layby Areas** - reinforced paving material areas for vehicle pull-off, porta potties, and vendor space during events
- 09 **Haxall Gardens** (see pg 58)
- 10 **Great Lawn** (see pg 54)

KEY MAP



PRECEDENTS

THE CLEARING

Smale Riverfront Park, Cincinnati, Ohio



Labyrinth feature using lawn and flat hardscape allows for flexible use of the space

Spruce Harbor Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Unique seating such as hammocks draw in visitors and encourages visitors to spend time in the park versus passing through

Bryant Park, New York



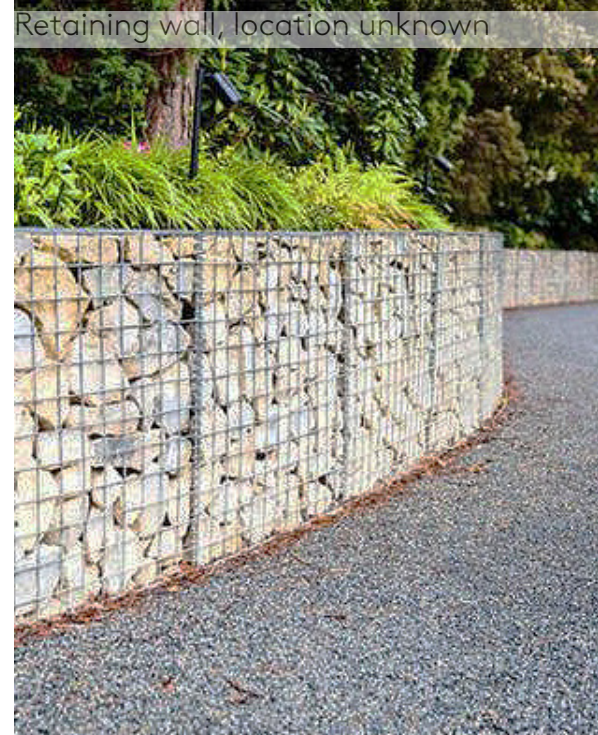
Windbreak of trees beyond central lawn

Spruce Harbor Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Flexible seating and dynamic light installation

Retaining wall, location unknown



Gabion retaining wall with riverrock fill

Klyde Warren Park, Dallas, Texas



Playground 'kit of parts' is an example of flexible programming

THE CLEARING

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IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

THE POINT

The Point area takes advantage of the existing elevated stair terrace at the foot of the 7th St. pedestrian bridge. This central location provides an elevated perspective of the whole island and with the addition of the proposed riverfront terraces will provide a glimpse through to the James River. This area is intended to be the heart of Brown’s Island and a central destination and meeting place.

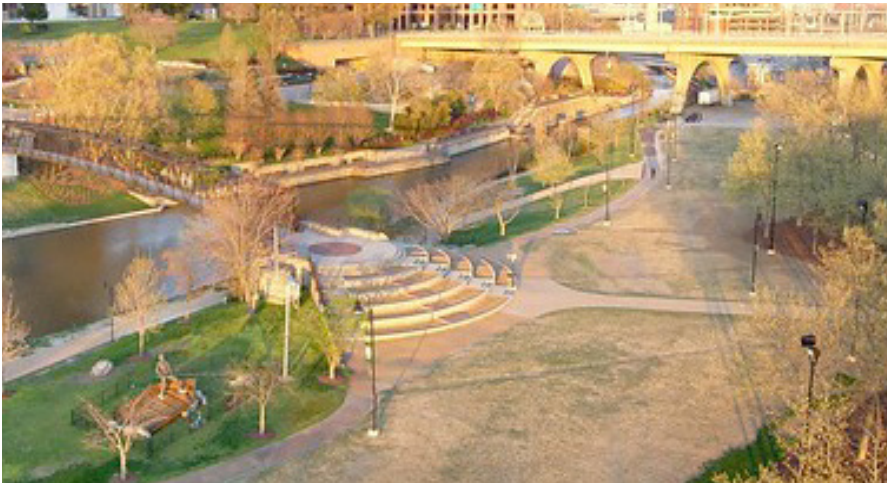
The existing stair will be modified into large deck terraces (wood or composite material) to give more modern uniform appearance. Shade sructures will be located to provide shade to part of the terraces to encourage lounging by visitors. At the foot of the terraces a pop-jet style water feature is proposed along with a row of large shade trees. The design of the water feature would ensure that a vehicular access zone remains around the main path that loops The Great Lawn and considerations will need to be given to pedestrian circulation through the space.

Another important improvement is the creation of an ADA accessible pathway down from the bridge to the island. This will ensure that all visitors can easily experience this vantage point of Brown’s Island.

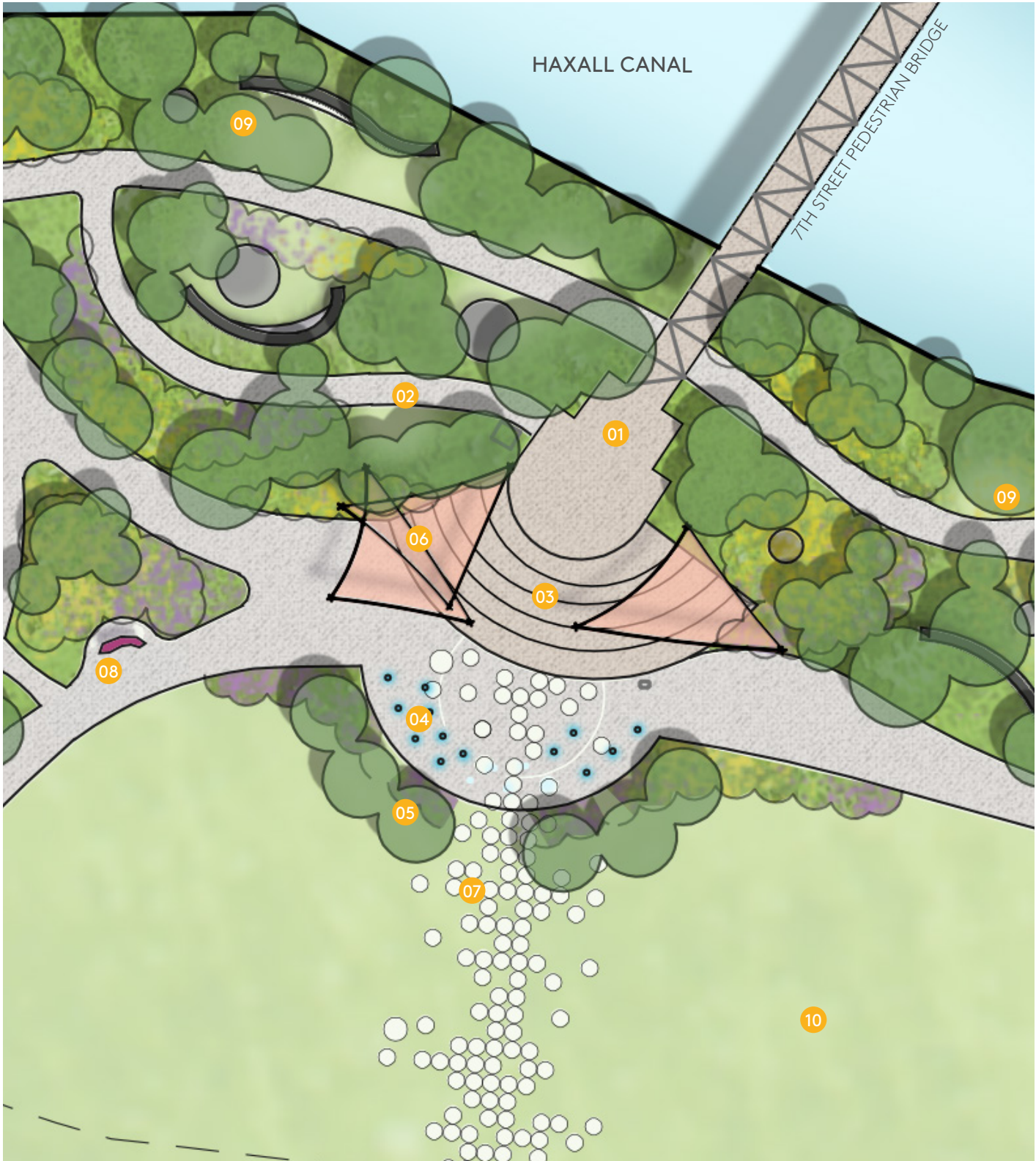
EXISTING CONDITIONS



Concrete terraces looking north towards pedestrian bridge



Aerial view of existing central stair (existing Headman statue can be seen bottom left)



SITE PLAN ENLARGEMENT - NTS

KEY FEATURES

- 01 Bridge Landing with ADA Path - the landing area of the 7th Street Pedestrian Bridge will be modified to provide an ADA accessible pathway connection down to the island along with new seating opportunities and directional signage
- 02 ADA Path - new ADA accessible pathway connecting the 7th Street Pedestrian Bridge with the island
- 03 Central Stair - the existing concrete/grass stairs are repurposed with new cladding materials to become a terraced seating and overlook area
- 04 The Spring - a pop-jet style water feature (flush to ground) in a hardscape plaza space with integrated color lighting for evening interest
- 05 Windbreak - at the edge of The Spring large specimen trees are planted to create a sense of enclosure for the fountain area, the specific tree species would be selected to ensure pedestrians can safely walk under them and see through the area
- 06 Shade Sails - tensile fabric structures strategically located provide shade to the Central Stair
- 07 Stepping Stones - patterned pavers in the grass (inspired by river rock-hopping) provide a connection to the Great Lawn and across to the River Terraces
- 08 Art or Natural Play Feature
- 09 Haxall Gardens (see pg 58)
- 10 Great Lawn (see pg 54)

KEY MAP



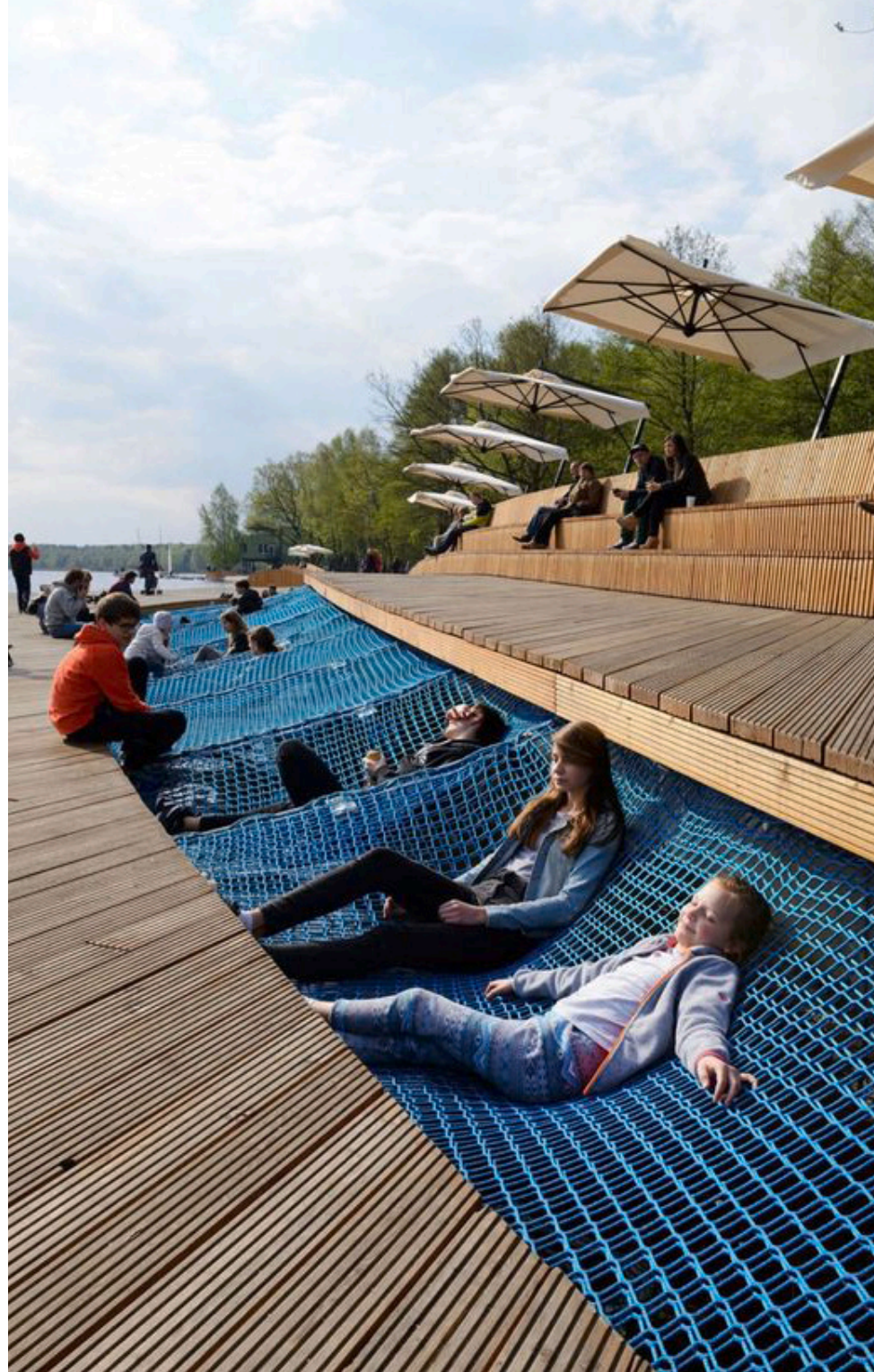
THE POINT

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PRECEDENTS

THE OVERLOOK

Paprocany Lake Shore Redevelopment, Poland



Wood-style cladding to create modern seatwall terraces

City Garden, St. Louis, MO



Fiber optic lighting at night creates an inviting space

Klyde Warren Park, Dallas, Texas



Simple design allows plaza to maintain functionality when feature is off

Fish Sculpture, location unknown



Nature inspired art in the plantings around The Spring water feature

Shade Sails, location unknown



Tensile fabric structures would be used to provide shade over the Central Stair

THE POINT

BROWN'S ISLAND | IMPROVEMENT PLAN | SEPTEMBER 2019

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

GREAT LAWN

The Great Lawn is a critical area of Brown’s Island for it’s role in hosting large festivals and events along the riverfront. Improvements in this area are focused on maximizing the usable lawn space and adding infrastructure that support events and vendors while also adding new experiences around the perimeter of the space that are geared more for non-event park visitors.

Improving visibility and access to the James River is a design goal for this area that will benefit all park visitors. The proposed River Terraces are a smaller scale version of the terraces proposed in the City of Richmond Riverfront Plan that will allow visitors to access the river. The Esplanade space and the widened shared use access path on the river side of the Great Lawn helps create visibility as well, particularly if the vegetation under CSX can be better cleared and maintained.

In high traffic lawn areas (event usage) various stabilizing materials and methods should be considered as well as holistic drainage and soil improvements.



EXISTING CONDITIONS - View of Great Lawn looking west from main stage location

KEY FEATURES

- 01 The Esplanade - a linear park space along the riverfront designed to accomodate vendors in an organized fashion during large events, planters and sculptural seating elements define vendor access and parking areas, see diagram on pg 65 for detailed diagram
- 02 River Terraces - hardscape seatwall terraces down to the edge of the James River, overhead protection from CSX Viaduct would be incorporated into the design
- 03 Riverfront Trail - new linear ADA trail connection from the T.Pott. to the Pipeline walk access path
- 04 Reinforced Surfacing- improved surfacing in designated vendor tent area
- 05 Stepping Stones - patterned pavers in the grass (inspired by river rock-hopping) provide visual and physical connections across the Great Lawn and help break down the scale of the space
- 06 Espanade Art Feature - a large interactive art/sculpture installation signature to Brown’s Island
- 07 Layby Areas - reinforced paving material areas for vehicle pull-off, porta potties, and vendor space during events
- 08 Paw Paw Patch - grove of native fruit trees
- 09 Haxall Gardens (see pg 58)
- 10 Back Porch (see pg 56)



SITE PLAN ENLARGEMENT - NTS

PRECEDENTS

GREAT LAWN



Klyde Warren Park, Dallas, Texas

Well maintained turf areas with irrigation and excellent drainage for a variety of daily programming



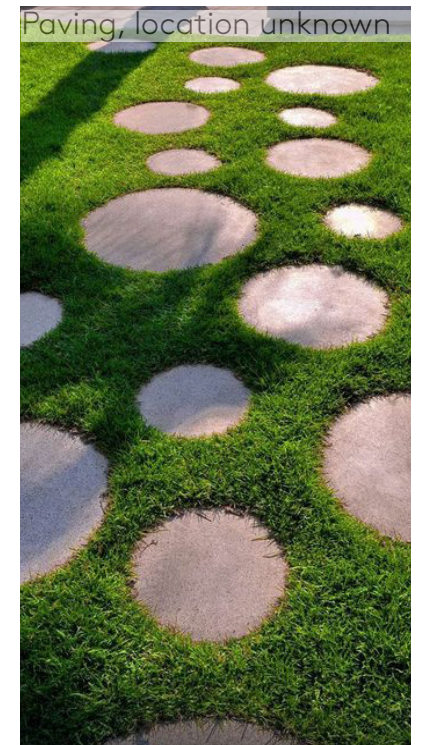
Klyde Warren Park, Dallas, Texas

Infrastructure that support optimal vendor layouts and function



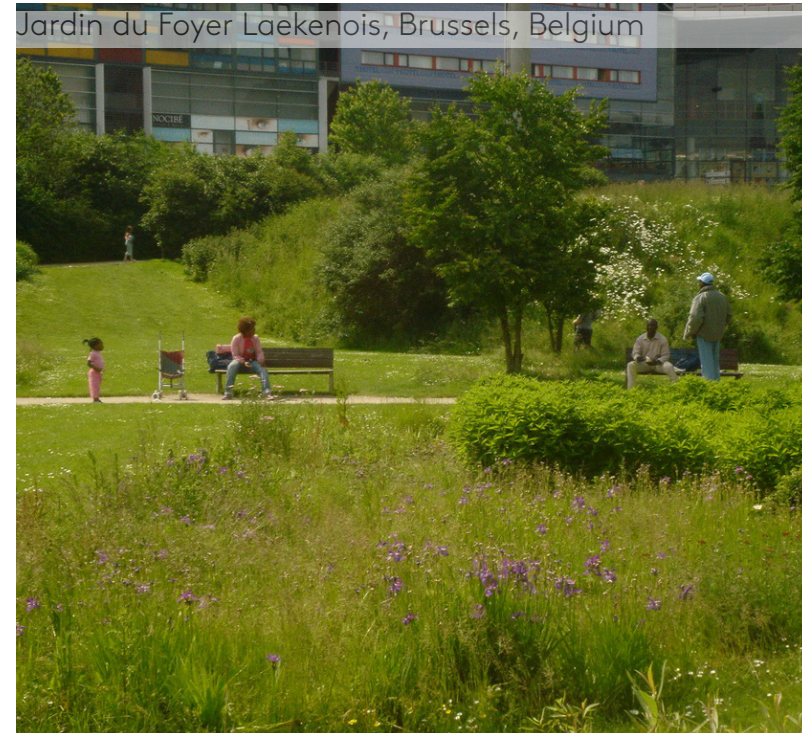
Smale Riverfront Park, Cincinnati, Ohio

Large-scale signature art element is a destination in itself for downtown visitors



Paving, location unknown

'Rock-hopping' pavers



Jardin du Foyer Laekenois, Brussels, Belgium

Naturalized plantings around edge of Great Lawn



Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London, England

The Esplanade has a organized pattern of trees and site features to support event functions



Siegen, Zu Neuen Ufern, Germany

River Terraces with integrated lighting and landscaping create a perfect complimentary experience to the T.Pott. at night

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

BACK PORCH

The Back Porch area of Brown’s Island is full of undiscovered potential. Since this area is fully shaded by the Manchester Bridge overhead it provides some unique opportunities not found elsewhere on the island. Also, as the main access onto the island from the east along the Canal Walk it needs to be just as welcoming and accessible as the Front Porch.

In order to ensure that this area can better serve its use as back of house space during large events only temporary and pop-up types of programming are proposed for the central space. Programmatic support buildings are proposed along the back edge of space along with screening for the Dominion substation. These buildings can house a variety of uses that support events and also daily park programs while allowing back of house activities to be carried out in an organized and neat manner.

The informal trail leading to the Pipeline walk will be upgraded and incorporated into a terraced space to help repair significant erosion that is currently present in the shoreline.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Aerial view of Back Porch area, substation in background



Manchester Bridge support and southern view to the river



SITE PLAN ENLARGEMENT - NTS

KEY FEATURES

- 01 **Canal Walk Connection** - pathway connecting the Canal Walk, heavily used entry point onto Brown’s Island should be welcoming and have clear directional signage
- 02 **Bicycle Racks** (one 10-bike rack)
- 03 **Living Screen Wall** - a large screen wall with vegetation covering it would help screen the utility substation from the park
- 04 **Circulator Path** - a connector path running behind the support building area that connects visitors coming from the Canal Walk over to the Pipeline Terraces and Riverfront Path, connector could remain open during events to ensure public circulation around the back-of-house area
- 05 **Support Buildings** - a cluster of buildings (possibly repurposed shipping containers) that would house program support features such as office space, meeting rooms, green room, storage, workshop, vendor space, trash/recycling facilities, and restrooms
- 06 **Flex-space Terrace** - permeable paver terrace for flexible programming, serves as a stormwater management tool for bridge run-off and as event back-of-house space
- 07 **Existing Bridge Support Column**
- 08 **Pipeline Terraces** - rustic seating terraces leading down the to James River
- 09 **Proposed Riverfront Path**
- 10 **Improved Path to the Existing Pipeline Walk**
- 11 **Art or Natural Play Feature**
- 12 **Haxall Gardens** (see pg 58)
- 13 **Great Lawn** (see pg 54)

KEY MAP



PRECEDENTS
BACK PORCH



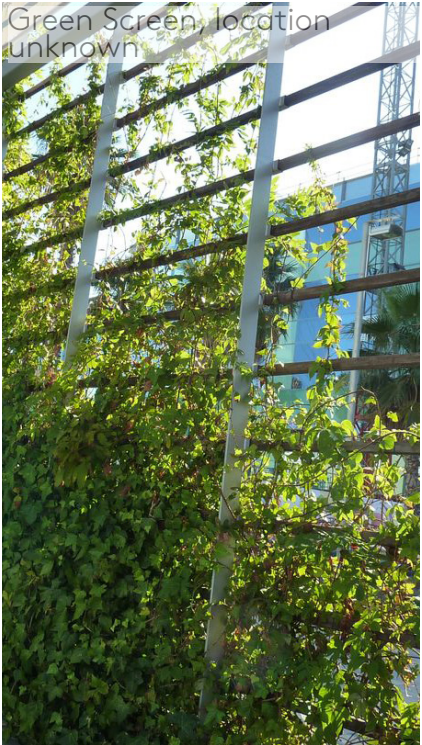
Temporary art and furnishings can create a lively community space



Seasonal pop-up recreation could inhabit the space between scheduled larger events



Simple buildings would provide space for various programming needs



Screening can be used to minimize view of substation



Large scale digital projections or other art could be incorporated into the underside of the Manchester Bridge



A cluster of container buildings could provide support space for programming such as outdoor recreation and events in addition to vendor space and general visitor comfort needs such as restrooms

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
HAXALL GARDENS

The Haxall Gardens area of Brown’s Island is about the celebration of art, landscape, and the Haxall Canal. This linear landscape along the canal edge is already a destination for visitors because of its shady and peaceful character. Suggested improvements build on that character and bring in art, colorful seating and lighting, and botanical specimens to enhance what’s already there.

There is a desire to provide more access to the canal and a new dock/deck area is proposed to bring visitors closer to the water and potentially to watercraft rentals. Floating art and lights, art on the undersides of bridges, and floating wetlands are intended to enliven the canal and encourage paddlers to explore.

The plantings of Haxall Gardens will build on the botanical makeover work that Venture Richmond has begun along other areas of the canal. The focus will be on using native pollinator friendly plants and removing any invasives. Additionally, the majority of turf grass will be removed from the sloped banks in this region and replaced with groundcovers and native grasses to improve water quality and eliminate the environmental impacts of mowing.

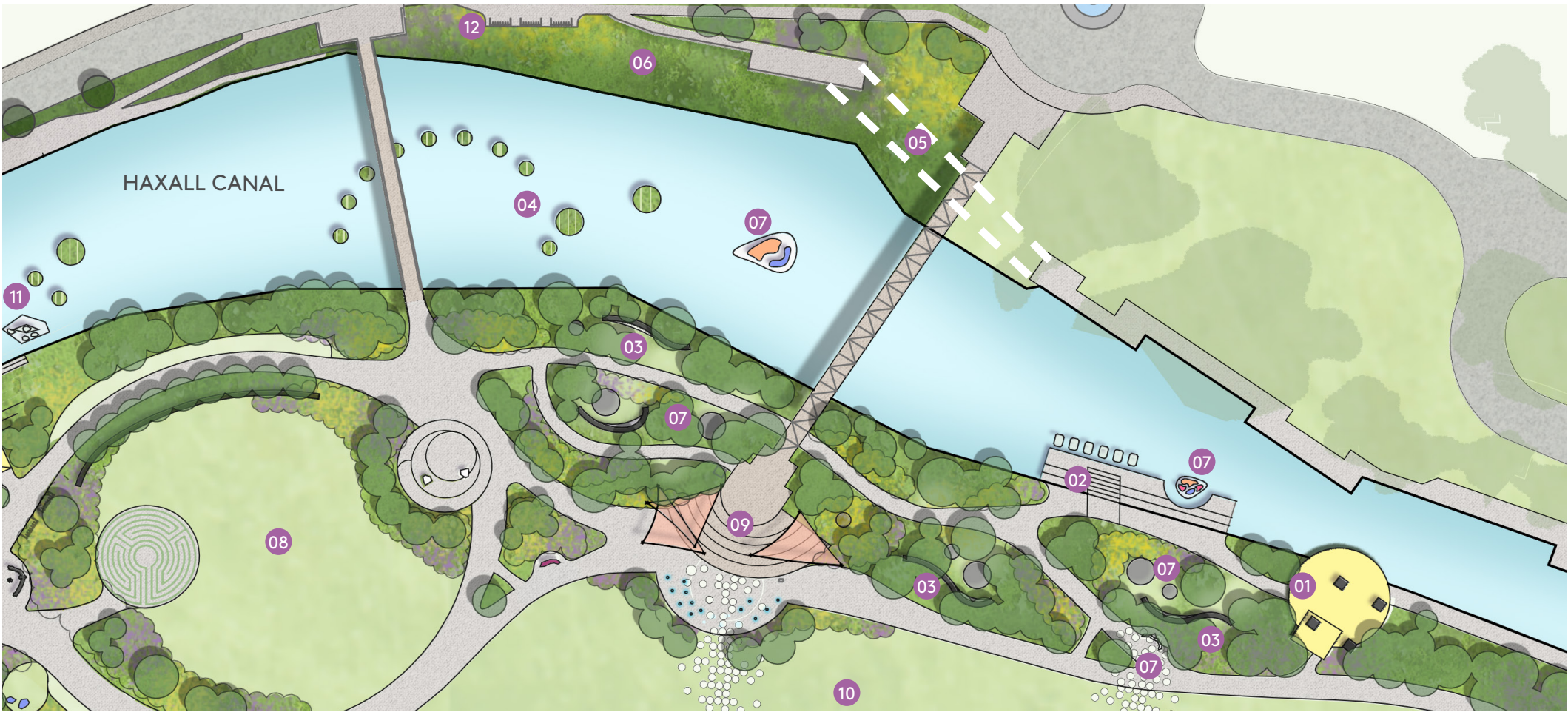
KEY FEATURES

- 01 **The Nest** - an elevated gathering space that uses the existing bridge pylons as support, inspired by Osprey nests along the river, this elevated platform can be used for informal gathering and would have a great view of the main stage area during large events, fully ADA accessible
- 02 **Canal Dock** - linear dock/deck space along the Haxall Canal for water access and canal viewing, possible watercraft programming (pedal boat rentals, etc) could be at this location
- 03 **Curvilinear Seatwalls** - sculptural seatwalls woven through the hillside landscaping, for sitting and for informal play, colorful and internally lit
- 04 **Floating Wetlands**- floating planted wetlands exhibit to improve water quality with interpretive/educational exhibit
- 05 **Future Accessible Canal Walk Connector** - denotes location of future pathway to connect the break in the canal walk on the north side
- 06 **Hillside Landscape and Monarch Waystation** - existing steep hillside would be planted with native milkweed plants to support Monarch Butterflies along with meadow grasses, perennials, and shade trees
- 07 **Art or Natural Play Feature**
- 08 **The Clearing** (see pg 50)
- 09 **The Point** (see pg 52)
- 10 **Great Lawn** (see pg 54)
- 11 **Relocated Headman Sculpture** (see Front Porch pg 48)
- 12 **Bicycle Racks** (three 10-bike racks)



EXISTING CONDITIONS - Haxall Gardens area along the canal looking west

KEY MAP



SITE PLAN ENLARGEMENT - NTS

PRECEDENTS
HAXALL GARDENS



Floating wetlands in the canal provide opportunities for education about water quality and provide visual interest in the canal



Branded watercraft in the canal for recreation



Naturalized native plantings along the hillside will provide pollinator habitat and seasonal landscape interest while reducing the amount of turf grass to be maintained



Inspired by an Osprey nest, 'The Nest' would provide a unique gathering space and overlook



Floating art exhibits in the canal create visual interest and night



Whimsical serpentine seatwalls in the landscape are functional elements that also encourage play



Simple art projects that engage visitors of all ages

HAXALL GARDENS

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IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

STURGEON COVE

The Sturgeon Cove area of Brown's Island is technically off-island but it is a heavily used area adjacent to the island that needs to be thoughtfully considered. The existing boat launch and beach area are heavily used by visitors for river access and the existing Bayscapes Garden is an excellent exhibit on Chesapeake Bay friendly plantings. Proposed improvements in this area expand upon these existing features and bring in strategic new elements to enhance the area.

The Bayscapes concept will be expanded into a larger more intensively planted area and a pavilion space that will provide opportunities for gathering and outdoor classroom use. The boat launch will be rebuilt and enhanced for durability and safety. Additional area alongside the launch will be developed into gathering spaces that can be used for programming.

Creating a safe and clear pedestrian/bike access though this area and along Tredegar St. is also a significant component of the design.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Aerial view



Looking west from the T.Pott. towards the boat launch



SITE PLAN ENLARGEMENT - NTS

KEY FEATURES

- 01 **River Pavilion** - shade structure with linear seating benches and built in storage for programming
- 02 **River Pavilion Deck** - deck space at the River Pavilion for group gatherings, events, or outdoor classroom use
- 03 **Bayscapes Garden** - revitalized Bayscapes Garden space using native plants that are Chesapeake Bay friendly, with interpretation and educational information for visitors
- 04 **The Launch** - rebuild existing boat launch to current use standards
- 05 **Terraces at The Launch** - rustic natural terraces in the sloped shoreline adjacent to the boat launch, can be used for watercraft instruction groups or other learning opportunities
- 06 **Shared Use Central Path** - improve and widen the central pedestrian pathway that connects Belle Isle to Brown's Island, to include widening the pinch point where it meets the Haxall Headgate
- 07 **Program Support Space** - designated area for storage and support needs related to future programming
- 08 **Tredegar St.** - create a broad pedestrian crossing across Tredegar St. to connect to the ACWM plaza
- 09 **Access Route** - maintain a clear route for routine beach access for dredging, design would ensure features in this area support weigh of machinery
- 10 **Art or Natural Play Feature**

KEY MAP



STURGEON COVE

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PRECEDENTS
STURGEON COVE



Seating terraces next to the boat launch allow for river viewing and gathering space for group recreation instruction



Large scale nature play element incorporated into the planting areas, educational opportunity about native wildlife



Boat and watercraft launch



Small observation deck area with interpretive signage



Naturalized native plantings surround the walkways and pavilion



Open air linear pavilion with bleacher seating provides shade without creating a large covered space that can be dark in the center, program storage below the seating



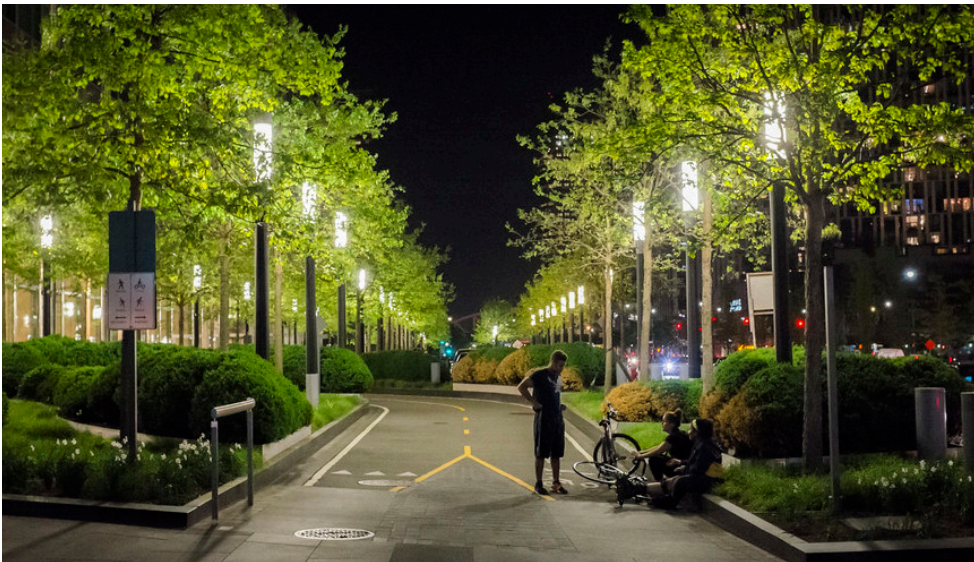
Natural play elements can be created from found wood and boulders

STURGEON COVE

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VISITOR COMFORT

Providing essential and desired park features that increase the comfort level of users is vital to the improvement plan. Safety features, accessible upgrades, and passive and active elements for children of all ages will need to find a home on Brown’s Island for it to continue being a successful park in the future. The following lists begins to look at numerous features that will find a home throughout Brown’s Island.



SUGGESTED FEATURES:

- 1. ACCESSIBLE WALKWAYS
- 2. PERMANENT RESTROOMS
- 3. FLEXIBLE SEATING OPTIONS
- 4. EMERGENCY CALL BOXES
- 5. DRINKING FOUNTAINS/BOTTLE REFILL STATIONS/PET BOWLS
- 6. WATER MISTERS
- 7. POP JET WATER FEATURE
- 8. HAMMOCKS
- 9. VENDORS (FOOD, BEVERAGE, ACTIVITIES)
- 10. SHADE (STRUCTURES, TREES, SAILS)
- 11. GUARDRAILS
- 12. SAFER PEDESTRIAN WAYS
- 13. TRELLIS SWINGS
- 14. WATER ACCESS POINTS
- 15. INTERACTIVE ART ELEMENTS
- 16. UNIQUE FEATURES FOR KIDS
- 17. INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION
- 18. BIKE LOCKERS/RACKS
- 19. PEDESTRIAN SCALE LIGHTING
- 20. VISUAL BRANDING/WAYFINDING
- 21. PET WASTE/TRASH STATIONS
- 22. SAFETY EQUIPMENT THAT SUPPORTS RECREATIONAL CANAL ACCESS



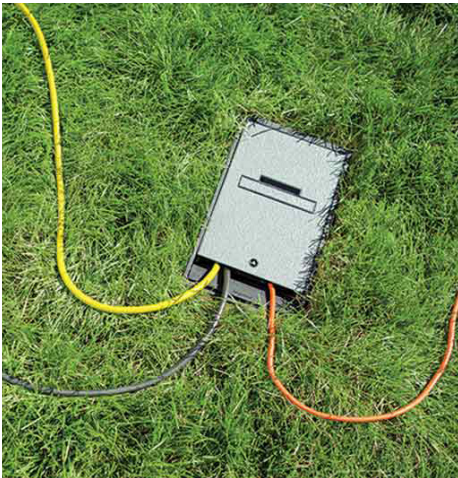
VENDOR & EVENT SUPPORT

The organized events on Brown’s Island, offered by Venture Richmond and their partners, will continue to be a major part of what makes Brown’s Island what it is today. Combined with the vendor survey done throughout the discovery phase - the following list begins to look at all the additional items needed to help continue to run successful and well-operated events.



SUGGESTED FEATURES:

- 1. WIDER VEHICULAR SERVICE ROUTES
- 2. ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS
- 3. GREEN ROOM (INTERIOR SPACE)
- 4. BACK OF HOUSE SPACE (INTERIOR)
- 5. BACK OF HOUSE SPACE (EXTERIOR)
- 6. RESTROOMS
- 7. DRINKING FOUNTAINS/BOTTLE REFILL STATIONS/PET BOWLS
- 8. REINFORCED TURF
- 9. LAYBY AREAS
- 10. TENT SLEEVES
- 11. MULTIPLE STAGE LOCATIONS
- 12. STRUCTURES THAT CAN BE DECORATED AS PART OF EVENTS
- 13. WATER HOOK-UPS
- 14. VISUAL CONNECTION TO THE RIVER
- 15. STRATEGIC STORAGE LOCATIONS
- 16. CLEAR GATEWAYS AND WAYS TO SECURE AND MANAGE SITE ACCESS
- 17. APPROPRIATE SELECTIONS OF TREE SPECIES AND PRUNING TO MAINTAIN CLEAR ACCESS WAYS
- 22. SAFETY EQUIPMENT THAT SUPPORTS RECREATIONAL CANAL ACCESS



PROGRAM VISITOR/VENDOR SUPPORT

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IMPORTANCE OF VISITOR ENGAGEMENT FEATURES

Brown’s Island is already an important park for the City and functions well for large events and festivals. It also serves as an urban greenspace that is used daily by visitors who live and work downtown and for JRPS users crossing the T.Pott. But there is a great opportunity to add features to the park that will engage visitors and enhance its appeal, particularly outside of events and festivals.

‘Project for Public Spaces (<https://www.pps.org/article/the-power-of-10>) has developed a concept called the Power of 10+ that is used to evaluate and facilitate Placemaking at multiple city scales. They believe that cities succeed or fail at the human scale - the place scale - and this scale is often overlooked. The Power of 10+ shows how paying attention to the human experience when building a city’s destinations can have immediate and widespread impacts.

The idea behind this concept is that places thrive when users have a range of reasons (10+) to be there. These might include places to sit, play features to enjoy, art to touch, music to hear, food to eat, history to experience, and people to meet. Ideally, some of these activities will be unique to that particular place, reflecting the culture and history of the surrounding community.’

Keeping that concept in mind we mapped out the types of engagement features proposed on Brown’s Island and their locations to ensure that they are arranged and layered in a way that creates synergy. This will not only draw visitors further into the island - but it will encourage them to stay a while and to hopefully make many return trips. The goal is to make experiencing Brown’s Island accessible to all and to have a range of features that appeal to a wide variety of park visitors.

Learning Opportunities and Historic Interpretation

Learning opportunities whether formal or informal and historic interpretation already exist on Brown’s Island and can be expanded upon. Additional signage, exhibits, and interpretation around the island’s history and that of the Haxall Canal would be one focus of future additions. Also, because of the natural setting that surrounds the island, an additional focus would be on opportunities that interpret the James River, native flora/fauna, and general environmental themes related to the health of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Art Installations and Natural Play Features

Incorporating art installations and natural play features into Brown’s Island is a way to engage visitors of all ages and backgrounds. Art and nature are universal languages that can be used to bring people together in conversation but also allow for individual experience and reflection. There is room on Brown’s Island for many different scales and typologies of art installations to reflect Richmond’s broader art community. Also, one large signature/branded art installation that is dynamic and playful (such as the Flying Pig from Smale Riverfront Park in Cincinnati - pictured at right) is envisioned that would be a destination and photo opportunity for visitors to the island. Also, natural play features fit into the broader James River setting of the island and can be woven in throughout the landscape areas in a more informal way.

Gathering Spaces and Prospect Points

Providing unique spaces for visitors to spend time in and that offer unique perspectives of Brown’s Island, the Haxall Canal, and the James River are a critical piece of this improvement plan. Ensuring that a variety of small and large gathering spaces, both formal and informal, are included is important. Also, providing flexible spaces with moveable furnishings offers visitors the opportunity to put their personal stamp on the space and leave a visual story for others to see. Creating spaces that get very high and offer prospect or overviews of the space is helpful for orientation. These spaces along with opportunities to get down very low to the edge of the river will provide a range of interesting vantage points and experiences.



Historic features and interpretation



Large-scale signature art installations that are engaging



Nature inspired play features and art



Educational features that engage the community



Flexible/moveable furnishings in bright colors



Unique informal gathering spaces



VISITOR ENGAGEMENT FEATURES

- Learning Opportunities and Historic Interpretation:**
- 01 Headman Sculpture (relocated)*
 - 02 Batteau Exhibit
 - 03 History Marker (relocated) *
 - 04 Bayscaping Intrepretation
 - 05 Three Days in April Exhibit *
 - 06 Mechanical Relic (relocated)*
 - 07 Emancipation Monument **
 - 08 James River Health Intrepretation
 - 09 T.Pott. Signage Relic (relocated)*
 - 10 Haxall Canal Walk Signage*
 - 11 Monarch Butterfly Waystation

- Art Installations and Natural Play Features:**
- 01 The Mill*
 - 02 Labyrinth Mural on ex. helipad
 - 03 Signature Interactive Sculpture
 - 04 Trellis Swings
 - 05 Pop-jet Water Feature
 - 06 Native Fauna Play Sculpture
 - 07 Pipeline Natural Play Feature
 - 08 Nature Play at The Nest (Osprey)
 - 09 T.Pott. Natural Play Feature
 - 10 Haxall Canal Floating Art
 - 11 Bridge Art and Light
 - 12 Paddling River Play Feature

- Gathering Spaces and Prospect Points:**
- 01 The Nest
 - 02 Central Stair
 - 03 Serpentine Garden Seatwalls
 - 04 Terraces/Water Access
 - A. Pipeline
 - B. River
 - C. Canal
 - D. Canal Dock
 - E. The Launch
 - 05 Potterfield Balconies
 - 06 Esplanade Sculptural Seating
 - 07 Hammock Woods
 - 08 River Pavilion

*denotes existing feature
**denotes pending construction

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

TREDEGAR STREET

As the main vehicular way adjacent to Brown's Island, Tredegar Street's design is important to the function of the island. While specific design proposals for Tredegar St. are out of the scope of this study general suggestions for improving pedestrian connectivity and safety are included.

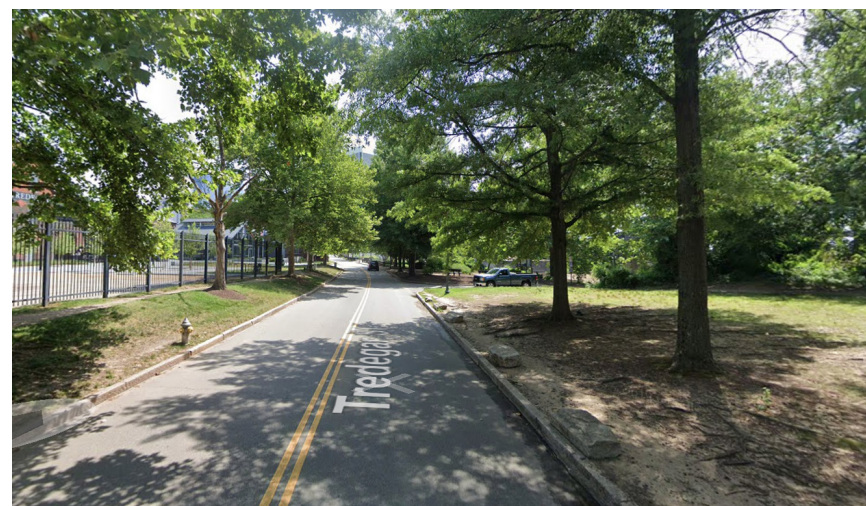
Overall, the sidewalk and path infrastructure along Tredegar St. is challenging to maneuver as a pedestrian or on a bike. Better connectivity (filling in gaps in sidewalks) and clearly defining pedestrian ways (crosswalks, signage, etc) would greatly improve access and safety. Traffic calming measures such as speed humps could also be considered. There are also opportunities to increase streetscape elements including trees and plantings, site furnishings, signage, art, and lighting to improve the pedestrian experience.

Tredegar St. could potentially be closed (or limited) to vehicular traffic during certain events or on weekends to create a safe pedestrian space. Or if it's design could be approached as a Bike-Walk Street which would prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles.

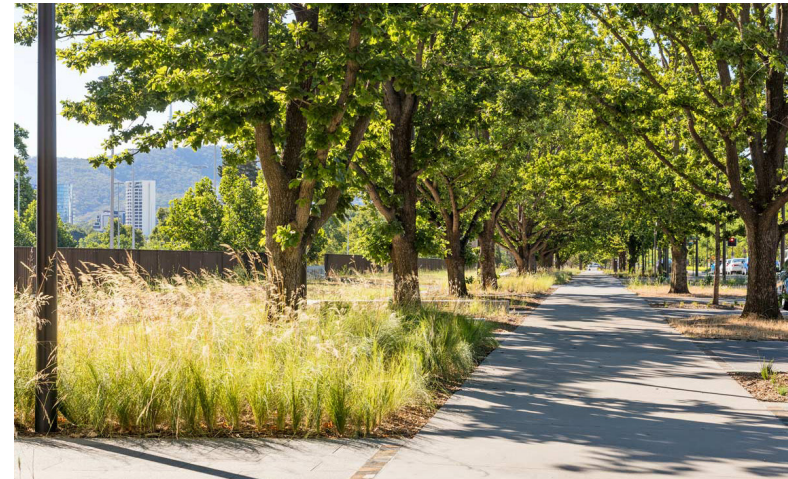
EXISTING CONDITIONS



5th St. and Tredegar intersection looking south



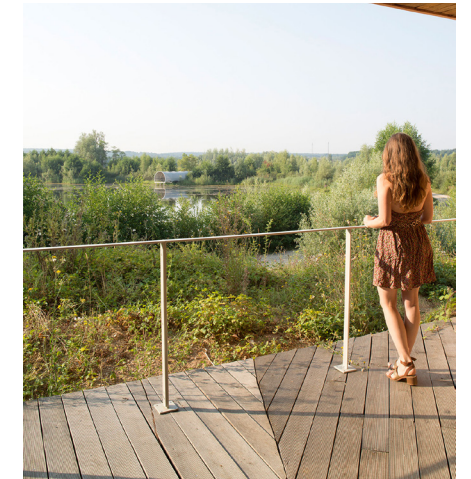
Looking east towards boat launch (on right)



Canopy trees for shade with low plantings for visibility



Safe pedestrian crossings at intersections



Observation/overlook decks

TREDEGAR WEST OF BOAT RAMP - NTS



A Improvements to existing stair access to James River, addition of observation platform/deck and gathering space, remove invasive species and maintain vegetation for visibility, expanded rock/boulders at water's edge

B Along southern side of Tredegar St. improve pedestrian walkway, widen and repave path, remove guardrail and shift path closer to river, maintain vegetation for visibility and remove invasive species, add bump-outs/observation decks for river viewing

C The intersection of Brown's Island Way and Tredegar St. needs clear pedestrian crossing markings, consider adding green infrastructure for stormwater management and for traffic calming, decrease overall amount of paved area to minimum needed for vehicular turning, add special paving/art in intersection to increase visibility

D Improve main pedestrian pathway to appropriate width for a shared use path and add directional markings and signage to improve safety

TREDEGAR STREET RECOMMENDATIONS

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Wide shared use path/boardwalk



Flexible-use hardscape spaces at street level

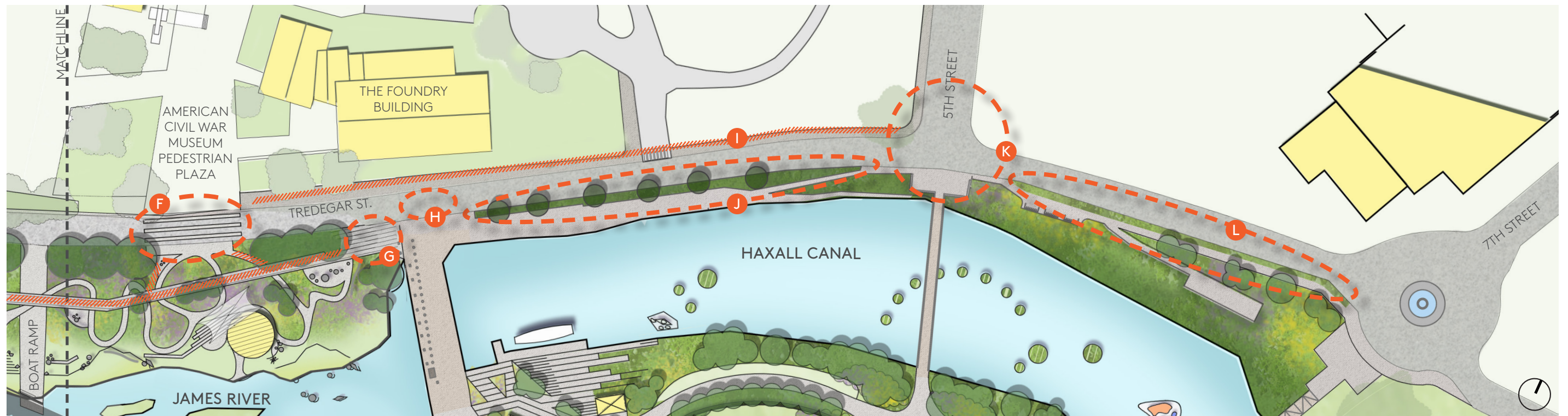


Green infrastructure and specialty paving in pedestrian zones



Use of art/murals to delineate pedestrian crossings and shared spaces

TREDEGAR EAST OF BOAT RAMP - NTS



F Create visual connection across Tredegar St. to the American Civil War Museum pedestrian plaza by adding unique paving material and signage, ensure paving is smooth or has designated crossing space for bike traffic on Tredegar St.

G Widen access point at neck of Haxall Headgate pedestrian bridge with additional pathway or boardwalk material

H Modify or remove cobblestone paving to create a smooth paved surface for bicycles to cross and encourage bike use of Tredegar St., this would also increase ease of use for pedestrians during events where Tredegar St. is closed to vehicles

I Create a sidewalk connection from 5th St. to the American Civil War Museum pedestrian plaza, incorporate plantings and green infrastructure to manage stormwater and for traffic calming, add street trees and pedestrian furnishings

J Modify pathway in this area to create a fully accessible sidewalk at the Tredegar St. level, eliminate narrow ramp and provide broad connection to the Halsey pedestrian bridge landing area

K The 5th St. and Tredegar St. intersections needs clear pedestrian and bicycle crossing markings, consider adding green infrastructure for stormwater management and for traffic calming, add special paving/art in intersection to increase visibility

L Modify path to create an accessible sidewalk at the Tredegar St. level, consider hardscape improvements that mirror the north side of the street, add bicycle racks and pedestrian furnishings, remove and replace guardrails with design that compliments bridge architecture

TREDEGAR STREET RECOMMENDATIONS

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