



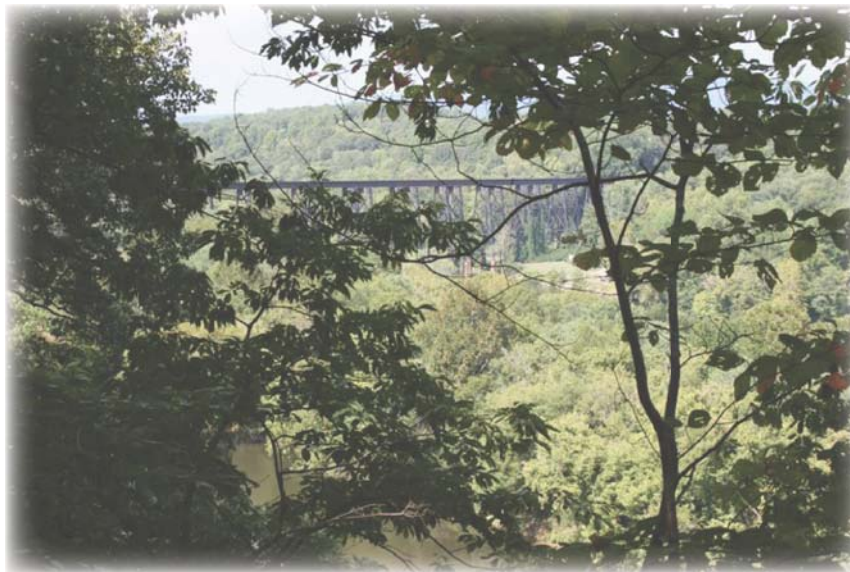
# *Riverside Park Master Plan*

July 2009

Prepared by  
**John Milner Associates, Inc.**  
Charlottesville, Virginia

for  
**The City of Lynchburg, Virginia**





# *Riverside Park Master Plan*

July 2009

Prepared by  
**John Milner Associates, Inc.**  
Charlottesville, Virginia

for  
**The City of Lynchburg, Virginia**

## *Acknowledgements*

Thanks to City of Lynchburg public officials, including the Mayor Joan Foster and the members of City Council.  
The Staff of the Department of Parks and Recreation deserves special thanks, including:

<i>Kay Frazier, Director</i>	<i>Alice Banks</i>
<i>Ann Majewski, Grants Coordinator</i>	<i>Tenial Bradley</i>
<i>Andrew Reeder, Park Services Manager</i>	<i>Jennifer Foreman</i>
<i>Charlie Youell, Construction Coordinator</i>	<i>Mark Reasor</i>
<i>Jim Douglass, Construction Coordinator</i>	

Thanks to the Riverside Park Steering Committee for assistance and support  
during the entire master plan process. Members include:

*Kay Frazier, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Lynchburg*  
*Heidi James, Lynchburg Garden Club*  
*Andrew Reeder, Parks and Recreation, Park Management*  
*Tom Martin, Lynchburg Community Development*  
*Tommy Hammock, Lynchburg Community Development*  
*John Sweeney, Lynchburg Police Department*  
*John Carey, Lynchburg Police Department*  
*Sally Schneider, Lynchburg Historic Foundation*  
*Carolyn France, Virginia Department of Transportation*  
*Gary Fichter, Public Works Department*  
*Emily Davidson, Junior League of Lynchburg*

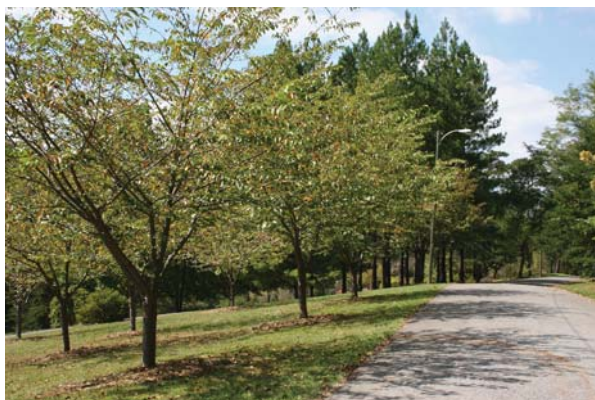
Thanks to the organizations that are active friends of Riverside Park and are responsible  
for ongoing projects and programs within the park. They include:

*The Lynchburg Kiwanis Club*  
*The Junior League of Lynchburg*  
*The Lynchburg Garden Club*  
*The Lynchburg Historical Foundation*

Heartfelt thanks to the many members of the community who shared their memories of the park and provided  
their insight and opinions which were essential to the planning process.



# Table of Contents



## 1 Introduction

Purpose of the Project  
Description of the Site

## 2 Historical Overview

Early Lynchburg History  
The Rivermont District  
Development of Riverside Park  
Historical Design Plans

## 3 Existing Conditions

Site Context  
Historic and Recreational Features  
Natural and Cultural Vegetation  
Topography and Drainage  
Circulation and Access  
Materials and Furnishings

## 4 Public Process

Public Process and Concept Development  
Concept Alternatives

## 5 Master Plan

Vision and Goals  
Recommendations  
Character Areas

## 6 Implementation

Phasing  
Estimate of Probable Costs

## 7 References

Endnotes  
Bibliography

## *Purpose of the Project*

Riverside Park is a place with a rich and complex physical and social history. It is a testament to how a park can be many things to different people. Its history is tied to the James River, where Native Americans once fished, and where European settlers came to ferry goods across the new state of Virginia. Riverside Park was a private estate, and then the grounds of a public smallpox hospital before being reserved as open space in a growing urban neighborhood.

Many Lynchburg Farm program laborers worked on Riverside's infrastructure. Many people and community groups have been stewards of its trees and other plantings. It became a place where historic artifacts have been assembled, including the packet boat *Marshall* and the Miller Claytor house in 1936, the train exhibit in 1962 and the Fink deck truss bridge in 1985.

The stonework of Riverside Park's stone overlook and Alpine Trail are unique. The preservation and documentation of this stonework is essential for retaining the park's structures and historic character. The stone walls that formed the edge of Riverside's public swimming pool are a reminder of a time when remarkable events were held there. These stone ruins also tell of a time when only whites were allowed at the pool and the decision was made to close it rather than integrate.

In order to preserve the historic features of the park and retain the serene and pastoral character enjoyed by visitors, the City of Lynchburg Parks and Recreation selected JMA (John Milner Associates, Inc.) historic landscape architects and historians and PHR&A civil engineers to prepare the master plan for Riverside Park. The master plan provides a comprehensive design strategy for the park and design guidelines for new recreational features, accessible trails, plantings, and visitor amenities. The goals of the master plan include:

- Plan for the preservation of historic park resources
- Organize and enhance the visitor experience
- Introduce site and structural improvements, including universal accessibility to more areas of the park
- Restore existing park amenities and gardens
- Introduce new recreational elements
- Maintain the visual beauty and serenity of Riverside Park



*Cherry tree blossoms in Riverside Park.*



*School group enjoys walking and picnicking in the park.*



*The main park trail provides a running and walking exercise loop.*



## Description of the Site

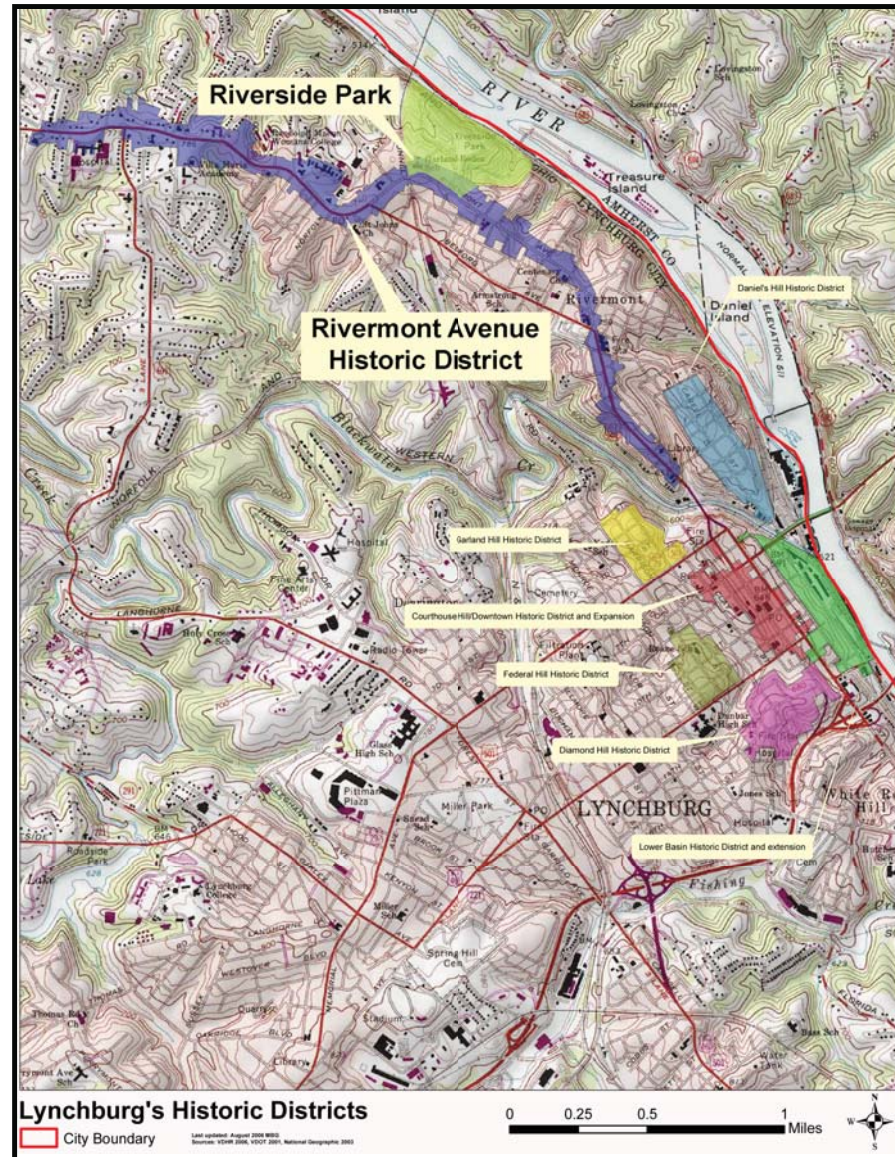
Riverside Park opened in 1923, and the only older park in Lynchburg is Miller Park, founded in 1862. The most prominent feature of Riverside Park's 47-acre site are the bluffs overlooking the James River. Paved walking trails wind over its rolling topography.

Riverside Park's asphalt-paved loop is the halfway mark and turning point in the Virginia Ten Miler annual footrace. Other active recreational facilities at the park include basketball and tennis courts and playground equipment. More passive programs include historic transportation artifacts such as the packet boat *Marshall*, a C&O 2-8-4 steam locomotive and the Fink deck truss bridge that occupy various locations throughout the park.

Riverside Park is part of the nationally recognized Rivermont Historic District and is located off of Rivermont Avenue, the spine of the 192-acre residential neighborhood. The park itself is listed as a contributing resource to the district, as is the former Garland-Rhodes Grammar School at its entrance (presently the Virginia School for the Arts). The Miller-Claytor House, which was relocated to the park in 1936, is also listed individually on the national register.

From 1924 to 1968 a large spring-fed pool was a primary attraction at the park. The city closed the pool after being mandated to integrate public facilities. The stone foundations remain in the park. The pool originally drained into a ravine called the Old-Fashioned Garden, and vestiges of these ornamental plantings and a small stone bridge are still discernible in the untended and overgrown area behind the train exhibit.

The forested areas in the park are diverse and contain many native species of trees and perennials. In springtime the park blooms with small groves of flowering trees. Much of the park's woodland trail surfaces are paved with hand-laid flagstones, one of its unusually beautiful, yet perhaps less known features.



Riverside Park is a contributing feature of the Rivermont Avenue Historic District.





*The Virginia School of the Arts (formerly Garland-Rhodes Elementary School) marks the neighborhood entrance to Riverside Park.*



*Stone structures give Riverside Park its unique character.*



*Stone ruins of the former pool walls in the central area of the park.*



*The site is characterized by rolling topography and steep slopes.*



*Riverside Park contains mature tree stands and new plantings provided by community groups.*



## Early Lynchburg History

European settlement of Lynchburg began in 1757 when a ferry was established to cross the James River, likely by John Lynch, who petitioned the state legislature to establish the town of Lynchburg in 1786.<sup>1</sup> By 1792, Lynchburg served as a processing center from which tobacco was shipped down the James River to Richmond.<sup>2</sup>

Canal and railroad transportation accelerated Lynchburg's growth. In 1840 the The James and Kanawha Canal was built to connect Lynchburg with Richmond. It ran along the northwest bank of the river, and greatly improved the speed and ease of transporting tobacco and other products.<sup>3</sup> Railroads arrived in Lynchburg in the 1850s and the Allegheny Railroad converted the canal towpath to train tracks in 1880.<sup>4</sup> In 1912, the Southern Railway opened a new trestle bridge across the James River at Lynchburg. This bridge forms the northwest boundary of today's Riverside Park.



Postcard of shipping on the Kanawha Canal, constructed in 1840.

Source: Edward Beyer, "Album of Virginia," 1857.  
<http://www.vmf.state.va.us/beyer/canal.html> (accessed 17 July 2009).



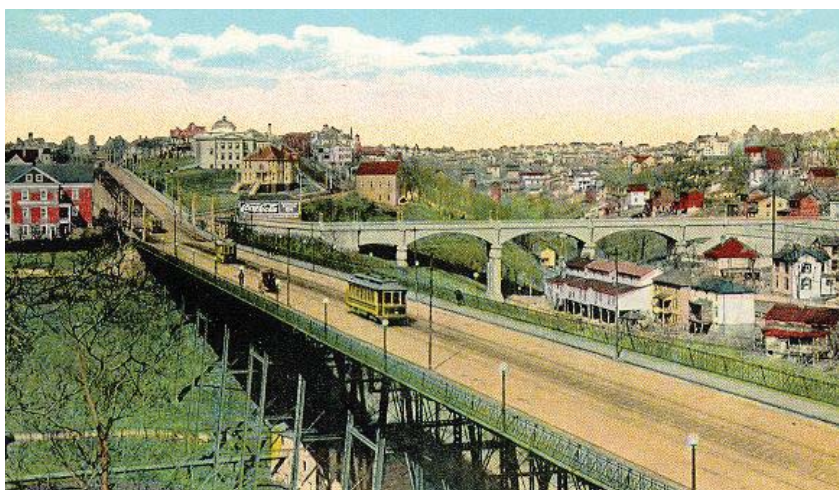
Map of Lynchburg, 1864.

Source: J.F. Gilmer, *Map of Lynchburg and Vicinity*, 1864.

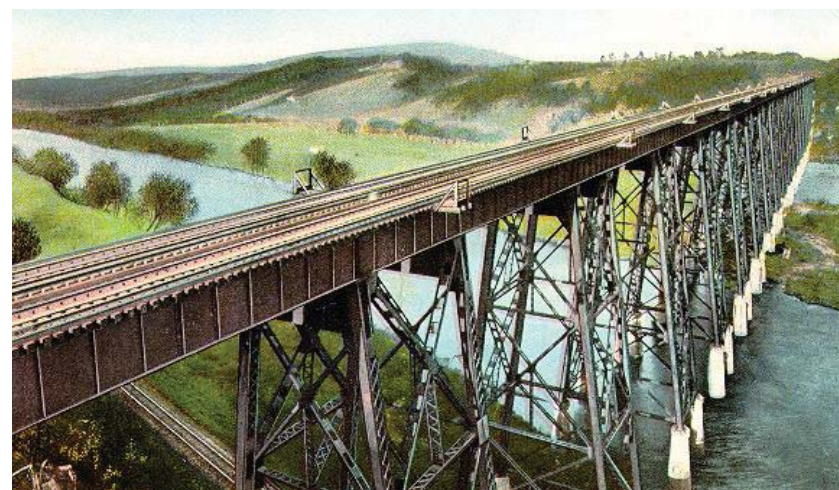


Trestle under construction, 1912.





Rivermont Bridge and D Street Viaduct.



The trestle over the James River is still visible from Riverside Park, but is obscured by trees.

Source: Vintage Postcard Scenes of Virginia, <http://www.retroweb.com/lynchburg/postcards.html> (accessed 20 July 2009). (Vintage Postcard).

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the land that became Riverside Park was owned by the Cabell and Daniel families.<sup>5</sup> In 1805, Dr. George Cabell built his home on Daniel's Hill, an elevated peninsula south of today's Riverside Park, and north of the confluence of the James River and Blackwater Creek (the city's northern boundary at the time).<sup>6</sup> Riverside Park occupies part of his former estate. As Dr. Cabell and his wife had no heirs, the estate was passed to his father-in-law, Judge William Daniel, and then to his son, William Daniel Jr., who built a Greek Revival house on Daniel's Hill called "Rivermont."

Around 1880, the City of Lynchburg purchased a home and five acres outside the city limits, within the boundary of today's Riverside Park, for use as a smallpox hospital.<sup>7</sup> An additional 40 acres adjoining the smallpox hospital were purchased by the city in 1884 for \$1,900 from William Duval Adams.<sup>8</sup>

A house on the hospital grounds was used as the residence for the hospital superintendent.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to building the smallpox hospital, Lynchburg implemented an aggressive and successful vaccination program. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there were only occasional smallpox outbreaks reported in the city; the smallpox hospital was often not in use.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the city was enlarging and the hospital was no longer on its outskirts.

The growth of the Rivermont community around the smallpox hospital and the adjacent development of the Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1891 became incentives for the hospital's removal.<sup>11</sup> The City of Lynchburg's Annual Report in 1890 resolved that:

*There is need for a new pest house. The building secured some years ago for that purpose in Rivermont is so near the Randolph-Macon Woman's College and the settled portions of that suburb as to preclude its use for patients stricken with epidemic diseases.<sup>12</sup>*

Despite this resolution, the smallpox hospital continued to be used to quarantine the sporadic cases of this disease that appeared in the city through at least 1912, and possibly through 1916.<sup>13</sup>



Map of locations of Lynchburg Woman's College and "City Park," 1891 (Source: Baist).

Source: G.W. Baist, Map of Lynchburg, 1891.



Rivermont Park, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Source: Vintage Postcard

## The Rivermont District

The Rivermont Land Company was one of the most successful developers in operation in Lynchburg during the economic boom of the 1890s. Edward Hutter, the previous developer of Danielstown, was one of its major investors. The company owned 5,000 contiguous acres of farmland north of Blackwater Creek.<sup>14</sup> The layout of Rivermont abandoned the traditional grid pattern followed in the city of Lynchburg and accommodated the rolling topography of the properties. The spine of the development, Rivermont Avenue, was the old Lexington Turnpike.

In order to attract buyers, the Rivermont Land Company developed hotels, parks, transportation, and utilities, such as a water works to pump water from the James River up the bluffs and into a large water tower to supply all of Rivermont.<sup>15</sup> In

1891, they also built the Rivermont Bridge across Blackwater Creek, to provide a direct connection from the subdivision to the city.<sup>16</sup> That year the electric railway service was also installed, from the end of Main Street within the city, across the Rivermont Bridge, and down Rivermont Avenue to a park called Rivermont. Rivermont was a private amusement park also developed by the Rivermont Land Company, located on Rivermont Avenue between Belvedere Street and Langhorne Road (which was inland, further west of what became the Riverside Park site).<sup>17</sup> Rivermont Park was incorporated, along with the electric railway, into The Lynchburg and Rivermont Street Railway Company.<sup>18</sup> Rivermont Park was a major destination on the streetcar line and had a skating rink, a bowling alley, a roller coaster called the Switchback, and a popular theater known as The Casino.<sup>19</sup> Rivermont Park operated until 1930.<sup>20</sup>

## Development of Riverside Park

The Superintendent of Parks, R.C. Driver, first suggested adapting the site of the smallpox hospital as a city park in 1903 when, in his annual report, he stated:

*Having noticed for some time the steady growth of Rivermont, I would suggest that you should not lose sight of the fact that one of the prettiest parks could be created where now stands the Smallpox Hospital. Roads could be temporarily laid off and trees planted accordingly, so that they would have time to grow before other improvements become necessary. Such an undertaking would, no doubt, be welcomed by everybody living in that part of the city.<sup>21</sup>*



Superintendent Driver recommended planting trees in anticipation of development. Although the smallpox hospital remained in use, 54 acres were placed under control of the Forestry Department in 1909 and became a tree nursery.<sup>22</sup> The Forestry Department planted 5,000 seedlings in the nursery.<sup>23</sup> Thirty-three American elms were also planted in the park.<sup>24</sup> Over the next few years, the city undertook preparing the park for site development, including fertilizing and sowing lawns.<sup>25</sup> The city's Annual Report of 1913 considered that:

*Riverside Park will no doubt in the course of time prove a very valuable asset to the City of Lynchburg. Much work, of course, needs yet to be done and a considerable amount of money is needed to bring it to perfection, but as Lynchburg is growing and more breathing places in the course of time are needed, surely the present Commission feels assured of the praise and thanks of the masses in regard to the farsightedness for the welfare of its citizens.<sup>26</sup>*

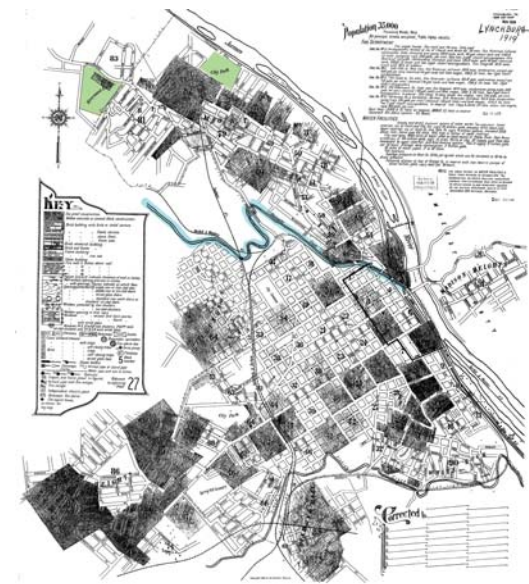
In 1914 Superintendent Driver reported that thousands of trees grown in the park nursery were being dispensed to area residents for their own properties and that the nursery grounds would become part of the new park. The Superintendent also suggested that 198 feet of roadway leading from Rivermont Avenue to the main entrance should be reserved and that a pavilion should be

built on the highest point in the park because, he wrote:

*Anyone who has had the pleasure to see the view for miles around from this particular point, will readily agree that "None Such" can be greater in scope and in beauty, and for that and for this alone this newly planned park is worthy of consideration as well as appropriation.<sup>27</sup>*

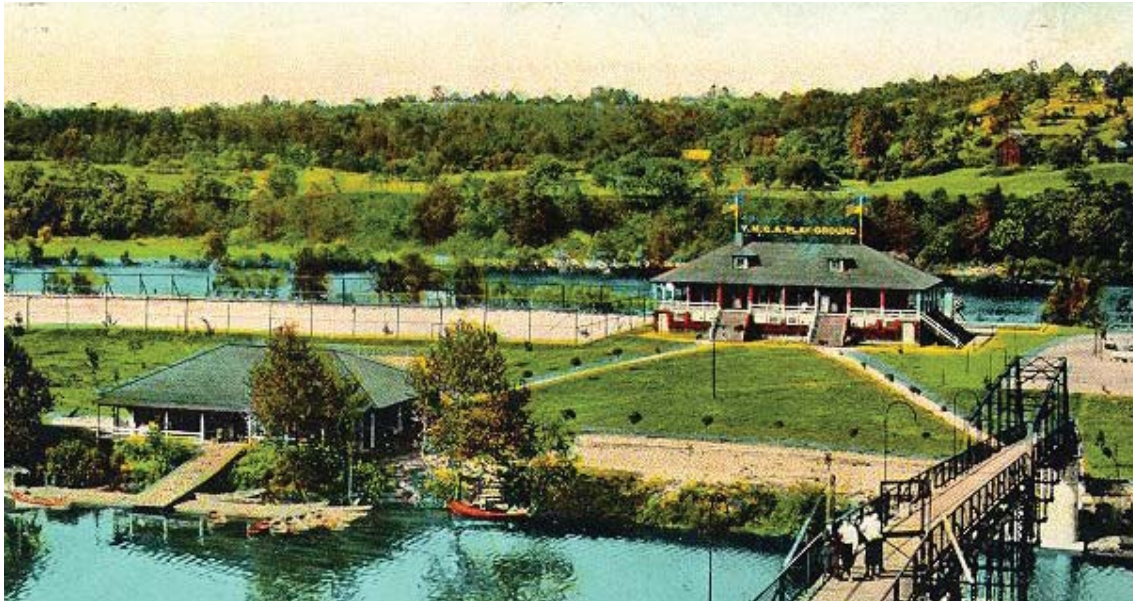
In 1917, the City of Lynchburg hired Mr. George Reed to become the new Superintendent of Parks. He remained in the position until his death in 1949 and was instrumental in the development of Riverside Park. The population of the Rivermont community was growing, and the Garland-Rodes Elementary School was constructed on Rivermont Avenue in 1921, adjacent to the main entrance reserved for the park and along its western boundary.<sup>28</sup>

By 1922, the city was focused on developing Riverside as a public park in earnest. A Roanoke landscape architect, Charles R. Mackan, provided a scheme for the park's design. He planned athletic fields, open spaces on a central knoll, a bird sanctuary, narrow pathways winding around the cliffs on the slope overlooking the river, and a lake and pavilion in the central hollow of the park. Features that were ultimately constructed closely resemble these initial concepts, including the pool and the Alpine Pass trail network. MacKan recommended the use of flagstone paving for the trail, for its rustic aesthetic.<sup>29</sup> Mackan's ideas were formative, but Riverside Park's circulation and plantings had been being developed gradually over a period of twenty years, from its conception in 1903 to its official opening in 1923.



Map of Lynchburg in 1919 showing the future site of Riverside Park, labeled "City Park," and the former Rivermont Park (upper left).

Source: Sanborn Company fire insurance map, 1919.



Source: Vintage Postcard

*The Y.M.C.A. Island Playground was reached by a bridge extending from Treasure Island Road.*



*The remaining road to the former bridge to Treasure Island will stay open for emergency vehicles.*



*There is a view of the railroad tracks and river, at the end of Treasure Island Road, where the bridge used to be.*

Concurrent to the development of Riverside Park, the Lynchburg Y.M.C.A. purchased the 31.75-acre Jones Island for an elaborate playground.<sup>30</sup> The Y.M.C.A. spent two years improving the island before opening their grand Island Playground on June 8, 1912. It featured a boat house, clubhouse, concrete swimming pool, a quarter-mile track, tennis courts, baseball diamonds, picnic areas and camp grounds. A steel bridge crossed the river and led to the island, originally from Fredonia Avenue.<sup>31</sup> Later, the island was accessed by a steep road that became Riverside Park's southern boundary, called Treasure Island Road.<sup>32</sup>

In 1931, the Y.M.C.A. sold the island to Michaux and Esther Pettyjohn, but continued operations until 1938.<sup>33</sup> The island passed through two subsequent owners before being purchased by Gretchen and Baxter Scales in 1947. The Scales used the clubhouse as their residence and raised cattle on the island until they sold the property in 1959.<sup>34</sup> Elim, Inc., a company affiliated with the religious leader Jerry Falwell, purchased the island in 1963 and developed an interdenominational youth camp on the site. In 1985, a flood washed away many of the buildings on the island as well as the access bridge. A fire in 1988 destroyed the remaining structures. The bridge to the island has never been replaced.<sup>35</sup> Today, the remains of the bridge languish in the James River at the bottom of a long, steep driveway.





*The view of the James River from Riverside Park in the 1920s.*

## The Early Years

When Riverside Park opened in 1923 the *Lynchburg News* described its entrance and how it divided to access either the river or the bluffs. The entrance drive was edged with three hundred newly transplanted trees, and divided into two roads: a lower road, bordered with a rustic rail, that led to the YMCA Island, and an upper road that led to the bluffs. The article also mentioned the Alpine Pass, and called it a beautiful stroll paved with old flagstones from city crossings.<sup>36</sup>

Prison laborers constructed some of the prominent features of Riverside Park. In 1915 Lynchburg established The City Farm, a rehabilitative institution for prisoners serving short sentences for misdemeanors. City departments used these inmates as day laborers and one of the projects they worked on was the construction of the Alpine Trail in Riverside Park, including laying flagstones.<sup>37</sup> The City continued to use City Farm labor at Riverside Park as they excavated a swimming pool in a natural hollow of the park. The pool facilities included a 420-locker bath house and opened in 1924.

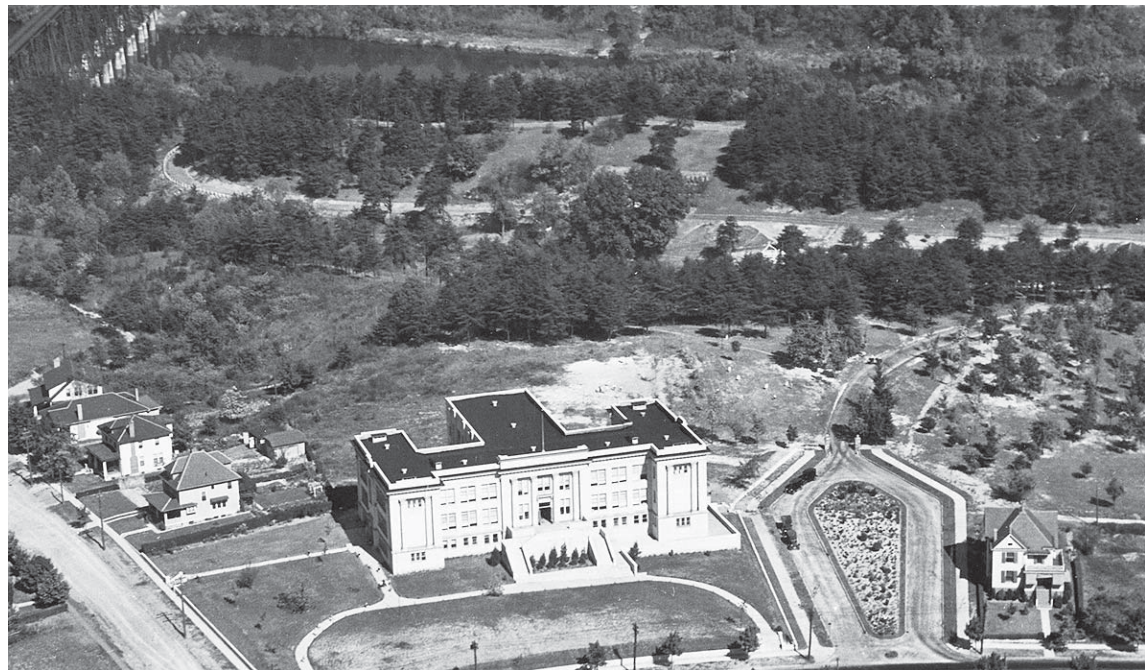
Another article in the *Lynchburg News* reported

that evergreens and a charming rustic fence flanked the pool. It was 70 feet wide and 216 feet long and its deep end was seven and a half feet. Its concrete basin held 500,000 gallons of water and took almost 24 hours to fill. Sand was banked at one end of the pool to form a beach.<sup>38</sup> Park visitorship was reportedly 154,097 in 1924.<sup>39</sup>

Physical improvements undertaken in the next few years at Riverside include lining the roadways with mature trees, seeding lawns, installing picnic tables and water fountains in a grove near the pool, and adding lights for night swimming. A diving and sliding tower was constructed at the pool and a concessionaire and rustic stone bandstand nearby. The E.C. Glass High School band performed in this

new structure in June of 1926.<sup>40</sup> City Farm laborers continued to extend Alpine Pass.

Ornamental plantings were a hallmark of Riverside Park. Over 200 Mountain Laurels were installed along the Alpine Pass. Below the pool a unique garden featured 550 rhododendrons and cascades and small ponds that flowed down to the James River.<sup>41</sup> The 1926 annual report noted additional plantings of hundreds of tulips, crocus, weigelia, spirea, yucca, peonies, roses, irises and English ivy.<sup>42</sup> A circular flower bed and two stone columns were established at the Ash Street entrance. Elaborate plantings continued over the next couple years, including more roses, evergreens, mountain laurels, gladioli, iris, canna lilies, and “wild shrubs.”<sup>43</sup> In



*An aerial view of Riverside Park, ca. 1923, shows Garland-Rhodes School and the new entrance to the park.*



1929 a “yellow garden” and 452 dutch bulbs were added to the popular Old-Fashioned Garden behind the pool, the Kiwanis Club donated 312 double-flowering cherry trees, and 300 trees and shrubs and more than 6,000 lilies were planted along the Alpine Pass. In 1930, the Kiwanis Club donated an additional 93 flowering crab trees and white-flowering peach trees to the park to be planted on the hillside between the driveway and the road to the Y.M.C.A. Island Playground.<sup>44</sup>

A wooded area between the Garland-Rodes School and Ash Street was described by Park Superintendent George Reed in 1929 as featuring fine rare specimens of burr oak, cucumber magnolia, bass wood, black oak, Japanese maple, tropical magnolia, aralia, cork bark elm, tulip poplar, mountain maple, ginko, cedar, red maple, scarlet, pin oak, catalpa, sycamore, and sumac; it was, he wrote, not unlike a botanical garden or arboretum.<sup>45</sup>

Park events during the late 1920s included July 4th celebrations, water carnivals, band performances and Easter Sunrise services with the United Choirs



Sanborn Company fire insurance map of Lynchburg, ca. 1933 showing Riverside Park and Treasure Island.

Source: Sanborn Company fire insurance map, 1933.

of Lynchburg. Five thousand people attended Easter Sunrise services in Riverside Park in 1929.<sup>46</sup> Also in 1929, at the request of the Garland-Rodes Elementary School Parent-Teachers Association, the area of Riverside Park behind the school was

paved to provide a surface for handball, roller skating, and other children's activities. The park also constructed three tennis courts in the area behind the school, and a playground, tucked in a small fenced area among the grove of specimen trees.<sup>47</sup>

In 1930, City Farm prisoners began work on a lookout tower above the Alpine Pass. This tower was built of wood with two levels.<sup>48</sup> The following year, work was begun on a second overlook, made from native stone from the park as well as lumber and curb stones recycled from elsewhere in the city. Completed in 1932, it was named the “Alpine Terrace” via a local contest.<sup>49</sup>

Beginning in 1933, Riverside Park hosted several federal work relief projects. The Civil Works Administration began work on the Alpine Pass and continued work on a guard rail.<sup>50</sup> In early 1935 the Federal Emergency Relief Administration repaired the walls of the Alpine Terrace by adding stone buttresses. Interestingly, these repairs were made using salvaged stone buttresses from a tunnel the Southern Railway was then excavating.<sup>51</sup>



Wooden lookout tower over the James River above the Alpine Pass.



The “Alpine Terrace” stone overlook built by City Farm prisoners in 1930.



Salvaged buttresses supporting the stone overlook.





*Alpine Pass with wooden guard rails, ca. 1924.*



*The Riverside Park pool and garden area, showing the small stone bridge in the foreground.*



*The 18<sup>th</sup> century Miller-Claytor house was moved to Riverside Park in 1936.*



*Memorial tree for George Washington Bicentennial 1732-1932, established by the Colonial Dames of America.*



*Oak Tree planted in 1937 commemorating the sesquicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.*



*The bicentennial garden was built in 1976 in Riverside Park.*



## Lynchburg Sesquicentennial Commemorations

As part of the City of Lynchburg's sesquicentennial celebrations of the founding of the city in 1936, Riverside Park received two new attractions: the ca. 1791 Miller-Claytor House and the ca. 1861 hull of the packet boat *Marshall*.<sup>52</sup> The Miller-Claytor House, one of Lynchburg's few remaining 18<sup>th</sup> century houses, was moved from its original site to the Ash Street entrance of Riverside Park to save the house from demolition. Charles Gillette, a noted landscape architect, was hired by the Lynchburg Garden Club to design a garden for this house, which was installed in 1940.<sup>53</sup>

The packet boat *Marshall* was also relocated to the park in 1936. The *Marshall*, called "the Queen of the James" during the canal's heyday, carried the body of Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson from Lynchburg to Lexington for burial in 1863. The *Marshall* continued to operate on the canal until the railroads took over in 1880. Until its removal to Riverside Park, the packet boat had languished on the banks of the James, half buried in mud.<sup>54</sup>

In 1937 an oak tree was planted in Riverside Park to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the United States constitution.<sup>55</sup>

A few years later, in 1940, the bird sanctuary originally envisioned by Charles MacKan in 1922 was finally realized when the Little Garden Club of Lynchburg succeeded in having 20 acres above the Alpine Pass reserved as a bird haven.<sup>56</sup> In 1960, the bird sanctuary was expanded to include an area within the loop formed by the park road.<sup>57</sup>

## Early Decline

By the mid-1940s, Riverside Park began to show its first signs of wear. The pool tended to overflow after heavy rain and fill with mud that washed down from nearby hillsides. The Alpine Pass had a tendency to wash out and needed frequent upkeep.<sup>58</sup> In 1942, fencing from around Miller Park was relocated to the boundary between the Southern Railway and Riverside Park to protect visitors and steps on the Alpine Pass were rerouted. This work was completed by City Farm prisoners.<sup>59</sup> Most of the other work noted at Riverside Park during the 1940s was for routine maintenance: mowing grass, repairing roads and the caretaker's house, and mulching and spraying trees. Security lighting was installed in the late 1940s.

In 1949, the Lynchburg Junior Chamber of Commerce wrote to Park Superintendent George Reed about these poor conditions. They noted fallen trees, overgrown shrubs, broken drinking fountains, and trash and debris throughout the park.<sup>60</sup> These conditions were documented again by the Department of Parks and Recreation's Superintendent of Maintenance and Repair, Clement Woodall, in August 1953.<sup>61</sup> In early April, 1954, a young girl fell 150 feet down a cliff from the Alpine Pass and, luckily, was unhurt, but a new wire fence was installed a few weeks later.

In 1959 a newspaper noted:

*It is best not to take the family too close to parked cars in the park. The bird sanctuary is littered with beer cans. The park is used for purposes other than those for which it was developed. The park is in a decline at this point.*<sup>62</sup>

Despite these deteriorating conditions, the park and especially the pool were still enjoyed by a significant number of people. Through the 1950s, the pool received an annual average of 14,000 visits. In the summer of 1952, an elaborate Water Carnival was held at the Riverside Park pool. This event included a water ballet, a life-saving demonstration, precision diving, and a comedy show.

## Building a Transportation Collection

In 1962, the first exhibit of a proposed Transportation Museum was added to the park and featured a railroad engine with a tender, passenger car, and caboose donated by the C & O, Southern, and Norfolk & Western Railways, respectively.<sup>63</sup> The railroad equipment was moved into place near the end of the swimming pool by the construction of an 800-foot spur line through the park from the adjoining Southern Railway's main line.<sup>64</sup> During this exhibit's dedication, representatives from each of the three railways were on hand to present the equipment to the city. The regional manager of the C & O Railroad, said that:

*The steam locomotive is the symbol of boyhood to every American man and the symbol of manhood to every American boy. So it is far better that this locomotive is put on a pedestal instead of a junk pile. From today on, all of the "junior engineers" of 2732 can see and also feel with their hearts as well as their fingers what a real "iron horse" looked like, and get an idea of the role it played in building this country.*<sup>65</sup>



A railroad engine, tender, passenger car and caboose were brought into the park in 1962.

Source: McVane, (Memory Workshop)

The exhibit was very popular; children enjoyed celebrating birthdays at Riverside and climbing up on the trains. Nevertheless, it was fenced and closed to the public in 1977 due to vandalism, deterioration and unsafe conditions.

In 1964, the caretaker's house at Riverside Park was demolished. The house dated to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was built as part of the smallpox hospital complex. The house had been uninhabited for the previous two years. The house was located in front of the train exhibit and its deteriorated condition detracted from this display.<sup>66</sup>

An additional exhibit was added to the park's transportation museum in 1985 – a Fink deck truss bridge. It is a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark and the only one of its kind in existence in the nation today.<sup>67</sup> This bridge, originally part of the mainline used by the Norfolk and Western Railroad, was patented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by engineer Albert Fink. In 1893, it was moved from the railroad and used for vehicular traffic, and when it was moved to Riverside Park it was put to use as a pedestrian bridge. Together, the packet boat *Marshall*, the train, the bridge, and trestle (which can be viewed from the park's northernmost end) reveal interesting aspects of the history of transportation technology.



The Fink deck truss bridge was placed in Riverside Park in 1985 and is used as a pedestrian bridge.



The packet boat Marshall was relocated to the park in 1936.

## Challenges & Change

Riverside Park was an active and vibrant place and the pool was always a major attraction. But the pool was segregated – not all of Lynchburg's citizens had the freedom to enjoy such places. In the 1950s, the Civil Rights movement gained momentum and African American citizens in Lynchburg began to challenge segregation along with the rest of the country. On July 4, 1961, seven African American youths attempted to enter Miller Park pool, conscientiously challenging the unspoken segregation of the city's park system. The protest was organized by Rev. Virgil Wood, president of the Lynchburg Improvement Association.<sup>68</sup> They were refused entry and, subsequently, all three public pools in the city (Miller Park, Riverside Park, and Jefferson Park) were closed.

Fear of interracial tension and potential violence led to closures of public pools all over the south and Lynchburg was no exception. In the aftermath of the confrontation, the public pools in Lynchburg's parks remained closed and Riverside Park pool was filled in with soil in December 1968. No other public pools were opened in Lynchburg until the new Miller Park pool opened in 1986 as part of the city's bicentennial celebrations and it was this sociopolitical climate that inspired the emergence of a group of African American men in Lynchburg called Black Moses.





The Riverside Park pool when it was still operational.



A similar view of the pool when it was closed in 1962.



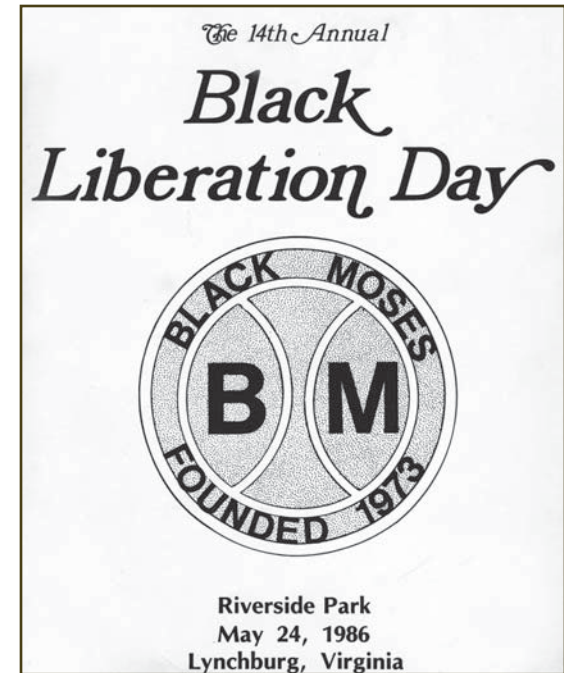
The top of the pool's retaining walls remain in the park today.

Officially formed in 1972, the Black Moses organization evolved out of ongoing discussions amongst a group of Lynchburg African American citizens who wanted to make a difference in their community by inspiring pride and confidence in African American youths. Their major annual event was Black Liberation Day, held on Memorial Day weekend in Riverside Park. It was a showcase for, in their words, “ambitions, dreams and talents.” The first Black Liberation Day was held in 1973, and these celebrations continued in the park until 1987, featuring many different kinds of performances and presentations of awards to local community members.<sup>69</sup>

The May 24, 1986 Black Liberation Day events included a full slate of activities from 12:30 pm until 7:00 pm. There were several musical groups, a fashion show, a Miss Bronze contest, and five speakers.<sup>70</sup> The program introduced the festival:

*Since the initial observance in 1973, many individuals have used this occasion as a showcase for their ambitions, dreams, and talents. Others have used this day to share a vision or belief or merely entertain. Whatever the reasons, many thousands of people from Virginia and other states have responded very favorably to this event.<sup>71</sup>*

Black Moses chose to hold Black Liberation Day in Riverside Park in part due to its historical association with segregation. These celebrations were held in cooperation with the Department of Parks and Recreation and, despite their popularity and the involvement of crowds of thousands of people, they remained peaceful and organized



The program cover from Black Liberation Day festivities in 1986.



Members of the Black Moses as pictured in the 1986 Black Liberation Day program, above.

Source: "The 14th Annual Black Liberation Day, May 24, 1986," program, collection of Walter Fore, Lynchburg, VA.





Paris Lenon with Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe.

gatherings. The establishment of the annual event led to greater use of the park at other times of the year by people who had previously felt unwelcome there.

Riverside Park became host to another recognition of African American achievement when in 1975 the Lynchburg Bicentennial Commission dedicated the Riverside Park tennis courts to Dr. Walter Johnson, an African American physician in Lynchburg who also coached minority tennis players in his free time. The marker at the Tennis Courts reads:

*In commemoration of Dr. Walter Johnson's lifelong pursuit of training minority athletes in the sport of tennis. Dr. Johnson was responsible for training and coaching such tennis greats as Arthur Ashe, Althea Gibson, Juan Farrow and John Long here in the City of Lynchburg. Dr. R. Walter Johnson Memorial Tennis Courts--Lynchburg Bicentennial Commission--May 10, 1975.*

Another plaque in front of the tennis court marker says: "Shrubbery donated by Lynchburg Links in Memory of Dr. Walter Johnson 1976."

Due in part to the efforts of Black Moses, African American use of Riverside Park increased in the early 1970s and 1980s. The park was the site of regular Sunday afternoon gatherings for African American families with picnics, basketball games, car cruising, and fellowship.<sup>72</sup>

During the 1980s, crime became an increasing concern at Riverside Park and major changes to the park's access and circulation patterns were enacted to address it. Some of the park's internal roadways were closed to vehicular traffic and the Ash Street entrance was closed. However, by the



Plaque for Dr. Walter Johnson at the Riverside Park tennis courts.

1990s the park began to be revitalized in a number of ways. A neighborhood watch program began to help reduce crime.<sup>73</sup> In 1990, the Lynchburg Garden Club replanted the neglected Miller-Claytor house garden, following Charles Gillette's original design, and a new playground was installed in the mid-1990s.

The turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century brought renewed attention to the transportation exhibits. In 2004, the Lynchburg Kiwanis began a "Save the Train" project to restore and protect the train components. The passenger car was found to be beyond repair and was removed. The locomotive and its tender were conserved and repainted. The caboose is currently undergoing restoration. The Lynchburg Historical Foundation began working to preserve and protect the remains of the packet boat *Marshall* and constructed a new overhead shelter for the hull that opened in 2006.<sup>74</sup> In 2006, the Lynchburg Garden Club improved the park entrance on Rivermont Avenue with a new sign and tree, boxwood and daffodil plantings.



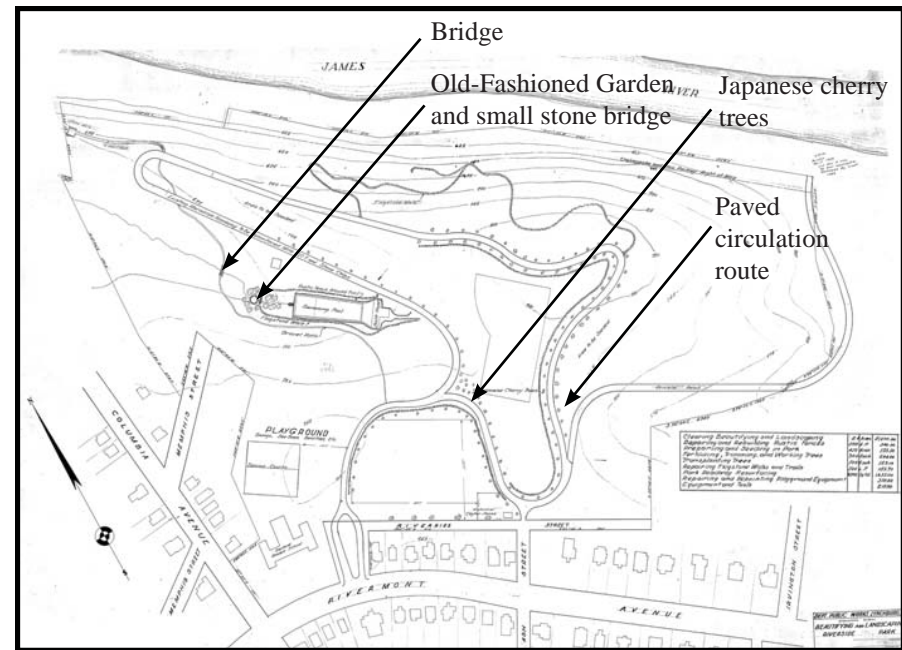
Miller-Claytor House Garden



## Historical Design Plans

The only archived drawings of the historical design intents and plans for Riverside Park all depict the large, extant vehicular (today, pedestrian-only) paved circulation route that circumnavigates the park.

The 1936 plan shows the Old-Fashioned Garden that was designed below the pool (and into which it drained), including the small stone bridge that crossed the ravine. Another bridge is shown crossing a tributary north of this ravine, over which the Fink deck truss bridge was sited in 1985. This drawing also indicates an intent to have trees bordering the eastern half of the park drive on both sides, a grove of flowering Japanese cherry trees at the intersection of the loop with the main entrance drive, flagstone-paved paths parallel with the drive at the main entrance loop and the eastern side, and a playground north of the tennis courts. The Alpine Pass is depicted actually descending the bluffs rather than on a parallel below the main park loop, as it was constructed. The pool and its bathhouse are surrounded by a “rustic fence” and another flagstone-paved path is shown encircling it. Although the bridge to Treasure Island is not shown, it would have been in place at this time.



1936 Plan.

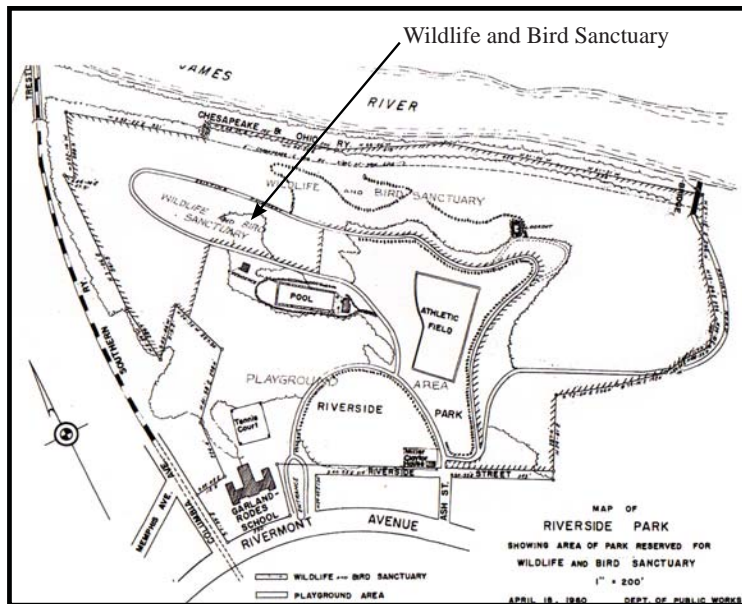


Remnant of the pool drainage structure that channeled water to the Old-Fashioned Garden.



The small stone bridge in the Old-Fashioned Garden area.



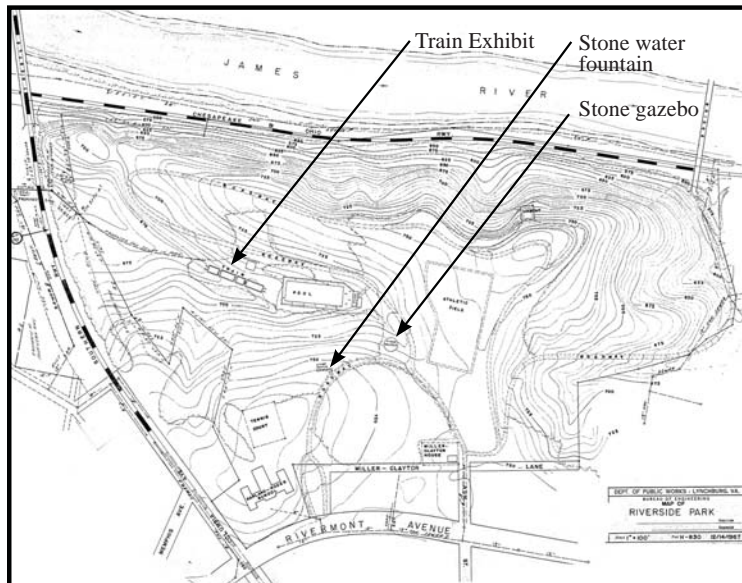


1960 Plan.

The 1960 plan no longer depicts the garden in the ravine below the pool. The “Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary” is labeled on the bluffs and in the western half of the park in this plan. The “Alpine Terrace” stone overlook is now shown on this plan (although it was completed in 1932).

In the 1967 plan the caretaker’s residence west of the pool has been removed and the train exhibit is shown (the first component was installed in 1962). The bridge to Treasure Island is clearly depicted (it washed out in a flood in 1985). This drawing also indicates the “stone shelter” (gazebo) and a stone water fountain. Although the pool still appears, it had been closed since 1961; it was filled in permanently the year after this plan was drawn, in 1968.

Interestingly, parking (which is a critical component of planning the park today) is not represented anywhere in these drawings. Until the 1980s visitors were able to drive through the park’s circulation loop. Historic photographs show cars parked on the shoulder of this loop, and parked directly north of the pool area as well. Presumably, visitors could also park on Rivermont Avenue and nearby residents walked to the park. One of the critical needs of the park today is adapting its design to the realities of a 47-acre recreational area no longer accessible by automobile.



1967 Plan.



Stone gazebo at Riverside Park.



Gates currently block vehicular traffic on the park loop road. It remains for pedestrian use only.



# 3

## Existing Conditions



*Historic Features*



*Circulation and Access*



*Vegetation*



*Materials and Furnishings*



*Topography and Drainage*



*Recreational Features*





Aerial photograph of Riverside Park and its neighborhood context.

## Site Context

Riverside Park is part of Rivermont Historic District and is located off of Rivermont Avenue. A public alley borders the park to the west and separates it from neighborhood lawns and houses.

The park is in close proximity to Randolph College and within walking distance on Columbia Avenue which leads to the college recreational fields. The James River borders the park to the northeast. The river is physically inaccessible from the park, however, views from the bluffs in Riverside are magnificent. The park is also in close proximity to existing municipal hiking and biking trail networks, including the Blackwater Creek Bikeway.



A public alley forms the park boundary next to houses on Rivermont Avenue.



Riverside Park could be a destination integrated into the city-wide hiking and biking trail system.

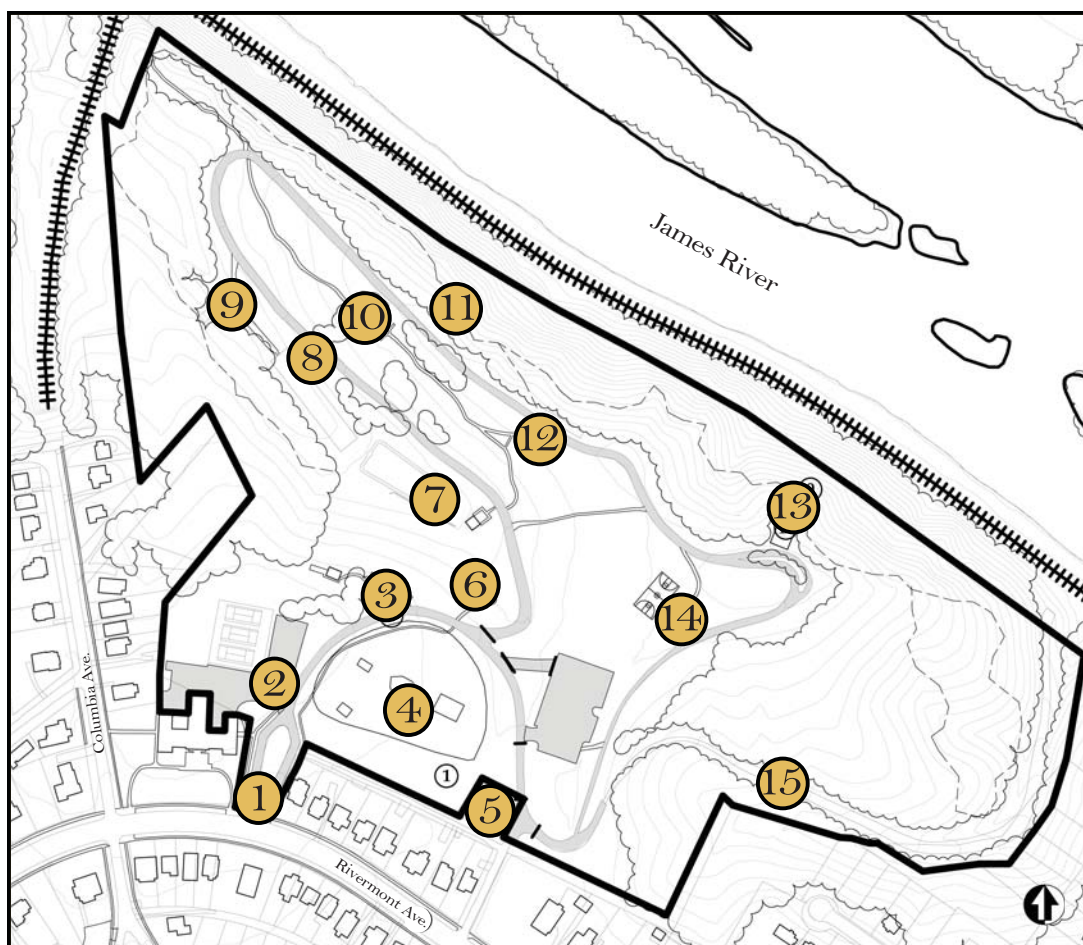


Columbia Avenue, west of the park, leads to Randolph College.



Students from Randolph College can reach Riverside Park by crossing recreational fields near Columbia Ave.





## Historic & Recreational Features

Riverside Park hosts an eclectic array of historic features and both passive and active recreational activities. One of the challenges of the master plan is to integrate the various destinations and activities into a park that can be easily navigated and understood by park visitors.

1. Rivermont Historic District (the park is a contributing feature)
2. Tennis courts dedicated to Dr. Walter Johnson
3. Picnic facilities
4. Playground
5. Miller-Claytor House and gardens
6. Stone gazebo
7. Stone foundation of swimming pool
8. Train exhibit
9. Fink deck truss bridge
10. Bicentennial garden
11. Alpine Trail
12. Packet boat *Marshall*
13. The stone overlook
14. Basketball court
15. Treasure Island Road



Miller-Claytor House



Fink deck truss bridge



Packet Boat Marshall



Stone overlook





*Basketball court*



*Playground equipment*



*Tennis courts*



*Picnic shelters*



*Pool remnants and public restroom*



*Stone gazebo*



*Alpine Trail*



*Bicentennial Garden*



*Train exhibit*





Deciduous trees



Flowering spring trees



Evergreen trees

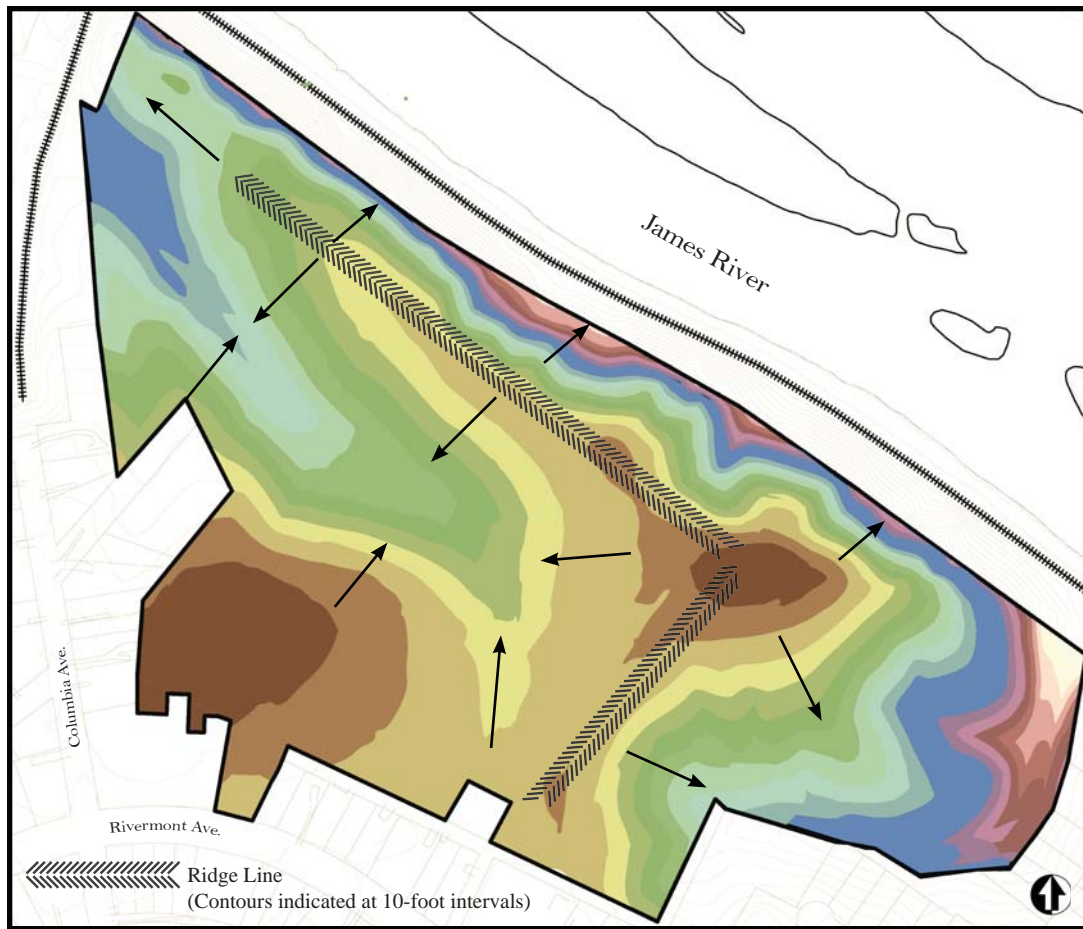


Forest

## Natural & Cultural Vegetation

Reports from the 1930s compared Riverside Park to an arboretum. Recently, additional cherry trees have been planted around the park. Rehabilitative work is needed to restore views and to clear failing trees and dead limbs from the park perimeter and internal areas. The following is a timeline of significant plantings installed at Riverside:

- 1912 Tree nursery established at Riverside
- 1923 300 trees planted to border park drive
- 1924 89 mature trees planted to line roadways
- 1924 Pool area described as flanked with evergreens
- 1924 90 climbing roses planted
- 1925 The Old-Fashioned Garden below the pool is established (550 rhododendrons; cascades flowing to the James River)
- 1926 Plantings included: 800 tulips, 160 crocus, 76 rhododendron, 7 weigelia, 20 spirea, 1 hydrangea, 15 yucca, 23 peonies, 26 roses, 40 spanish iris, and 100 English ivy
- 1927 Circular planting bed at the Ash Street entrance established. Additional plantings: 34 roses, 30 small evergreens, 2 American Arborvitae, 78 Kalmia Latifolia, 50 gladiola bulbs, 133 iris, 50 canna roots, and 76 wild shrubs
- 1929 A yellow garden and 452 dutch bulbs added to the Old-fashioned Garden; 300 trees and shrubs and 6,452 lilies planted along the Alpine Pass
- 1929 Riverside Park featured fine specimens of burr oak, cucumber, bass wood, black oak, Japanese maple, tropical magnolia, aralia and cork bark elm, tulip poplar, mountain maple, ginko, cedar, red maple, scarlet and pin oak, catalpa, sycamore and sumac
- 1930 The Kiwanis Club planted 93 flowering crab trees and white-flowering peach trees on the hillside between the driveway and the road to the Y.M.C.A. Island Playground
- 1936 Charles Gillette designed the Miller-Claytor garden for Lynchburg's sesquicentennial
- 1937 An Oak Tree is planted, to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the U.S. Constitution
- 1940 Gillette garden installed at the Millor-Claytor House



## Topography & Drainage

Another of Riverside Park's most striking features is its picturesque, rolling topography. It has two high points, at 768 feet in elevation at the tennis courts, and 766 feet at the rise just south of the stone overlook. But the two ridgelines that transect the park (indicated at left) form its spine and determined the layout of the park's historic tour loop.

From these ridge lines, the park gently descends to the south and west into a ravine. Its northeast side is a steep bluff facing the James River. On the southeast, a slope less steep, but still challenging to traverse, runs down into another ravine, the bottom of which is the park's lowest elevation (520 feet at the end of Treasure Island Road).

In all, the park drops 248 feet in elevation within its 47 acres (*areas of highest elevation are indicated with dark brown*), necessitating a variety of drainage structures. By following an elevational band around the park's ridgelines it was possible to engineer a circulation system that avoided overly steep climbs. However, crossing between many of the park's features is prohibitively steep for universal accessibility. Accommodations, such as supplemental connections incorporating switchbacks, are necessary to link key destinations.



The Alpine Trail is not universally accessible and has steep shoulders.



The park is characterized by rolling hills and long views.



Trails follow ridge lines but also cross topography lines, creating steeply sloped paths.



A plateau was created for the basketball courts.





*Trail surface erosion exposes a corrugated metal drain pipe.*



*Leaves and soil fill a drainage pipe that passes under a trail.*

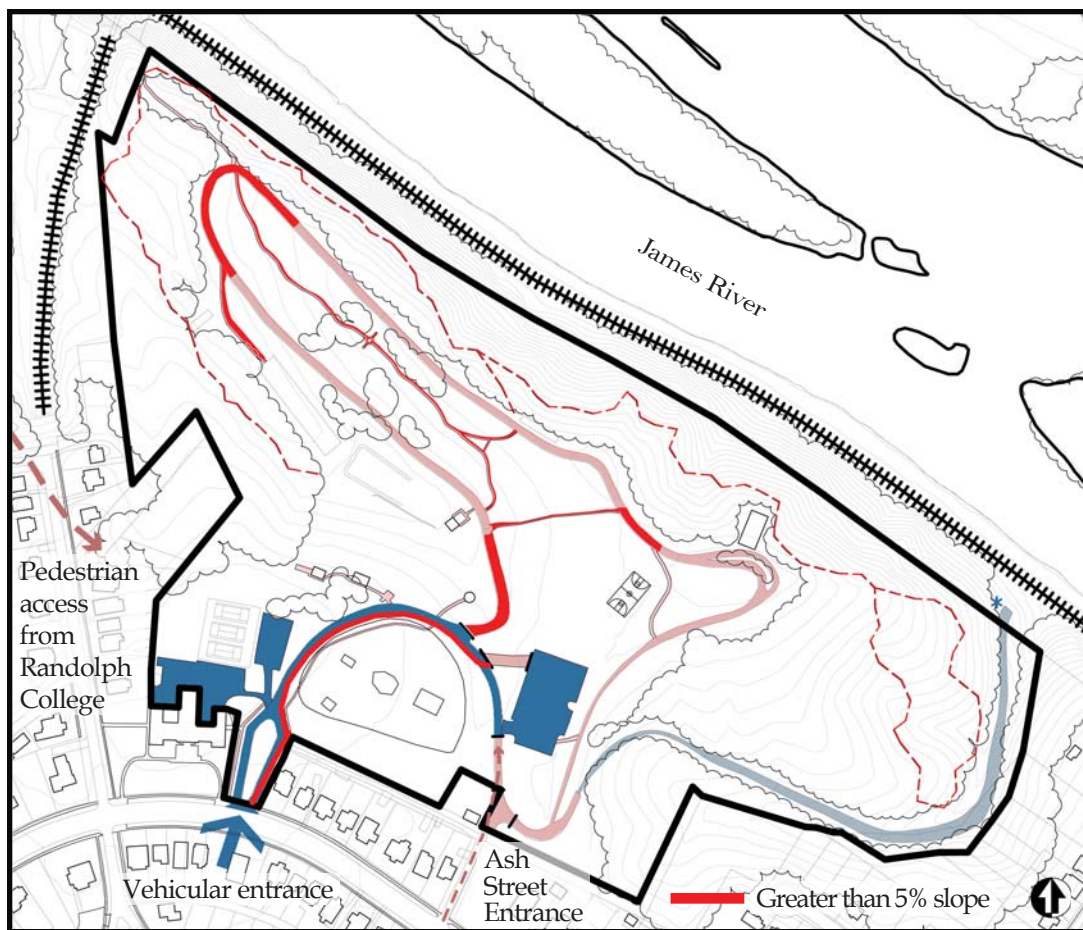


*This drainage structure is blocked and water flow is prohibited.*



*This drainage structure is damaged due to pavement disintegration.*





## Circulation & Access

Vehicular access at Riverside Park (*indicated in blue*) is currently limited to the entrance it shares with the Virginia School of the Arts, off Rivermont Avenue. Historically, vehicles could also exit at Ash Street (on the east side of the Miller-Claytor house). The Ash Street exit was restricted in the 1980s, when the park's main loop was closed to vehicular traffic. Both of these measures were taken to discourage undesirable uses of the park. An array of bollards and other obstacles have been installed at the edges of the entrance corridor and parking lot to obstruct visitors from driving beyond these areas.

The potential for criminal activity, particularly after dark, remains a concern. For this reason, public opinion is strongly in favor of retaining current controls, including having only one point of access and egress to and from the park and retaining bollards or other necessary obstacles to prohibit unlawful vehicular access. Driving to the bottom of Treasure Island Road is prohibited to all but emergency vehicles. This location is a critical route for rescue workers and other professionals to access the river.

Pedestrian circulation (*indicated in red*), is problematic for universal accessibility. While the Alpine Trail is not expected to be adapted, the circulation routes in the interior of the park should offer accessible options. Currently, the courses of this system indicated in bright red traverse slopes greater than five percent.



Portions of the main trail loop are not universally accessible.



Ash Street entrance.



The park loop road has been closed to vehicles since 1985.



The trail and steps to the stone gazebo are not universally accessible.





Wooden bollards and tire bumpers.



Erosion damage on gravel trail.



Intersection of gravel trail and asphalt roadway.



Flagstones on Alpine Trail.



Asphalt curbs.



Stone remnant curbs.



Picnic shelters constructed with wood.



Water fountain with concrete base.



Metal bench with concrete base.



Wooden bench with gravel base.

## Materials & Furnishings

### Roadways and Trails

The City of Lynchburg has used a range of pavement and curb material in Riverside Park. The main vehicular route, the parking lots, and the pedestrian loop road are currently paved with asphalt. Curbs range from historic stone remnants to deteriorating wood. Portions of these roadways are lined with wooden bollards or large stone wall caps which were donated to the park.

Most of the trails within the park are paved with gravel, including the trails that lead to the train exhibit, trestle, and Bicentennial Garden, as well as the trails that connect sections of the loop road. The walkway leading to the stone gazebo is also paved with gravel, though this path is edged with wood and has wood steps. Some portions of the Alpine Trail are paved with flagstones.

### Furnishings

Visitor amenities and furnishings in the park include benches, trash receptacles, picnic shelters, and a water fountain. The furnishings do not have a consistent style or color and are constructed from a variety of materials.





Entrance sign on Rivermont Avenue with additional train project signs.



Park identification sign in the median of the entrance.

## Signage

Riverside Park has an array of signage types, styles, and colors. Types of signage include: entrance and features; park regulations; vehicular regulations; interpretation; historical monument markers; and notification for events or other information about park history or activities.



Signage kiosks and frames for park events or information.



Sign with park rules and regulations.



Interpretive sign for the Alpine Trail.



Historic monument plaques are scattered throughout the park.



Sign with park rules and regulations.



“Save the Train” sign.





One-on-one discussions at the public meetings.



Planning team facilitators record public comments.



Public meetings provided new insights for the conceptual development of the master plan.

## *Public Process and Concept Development*

Before the master plan process for Riverside Park was underway, the Lynchburg Department of Parks and Recreation partnered with community groups to facilitate work on specific projects within the park. Also, a Riverside Park Steering Committee was formed to oversee the entire master plan process. The Steering Committee is made up of a cross section of the community including representatives of Lynchburg Parks and Recreation, Planning, Engineering and Police. Also on the committee are representatives of the Garden Club, the Junior League, the Lynchburg Historic Foundation and VDOT.

Public participation and approval is essential for the successful completion and implementation of a master plan. In the course of a series of public meetings and workshops, community members contributed their thoughts and ideas during the planning and design process. This process was critical to ensure that the users and neighbors of the park had a role in the decisions that will affect its future.

### **Public Meeting #1: Memory Workshop**

On November 8, 2007, the planning team held a “Memory Workshop” for the Lynchburg community. Citizens communicated their experiences and emotional attachments to Riverside Park through oral history, written memories, and videotaped recollections. Participants included representatives from Randolph College, the City of Lynchburg, the Historical Society, the Garden Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Junior League, the City police, and various community members and neighbors of the park. Many people brought personal photographs of the park and from these and the stories gathered over the course of the workshop, the planning team gained important insights into the history of the park and its meaning to the people of the community.

### **Focus Group Meeting: African American Community Leaders**

In December 2007, members of the planning team met with four African American Vietnam veterans who became community leaders after their return and formed the Black Moses group. This group was responsible for the annual Black Liberation Day which was held in Riverside Park from 1973-1986. The stories told by these men gave the planning team invaluable insight into the memories and meaning of the park to the African American community of Lynchburg. The team was challenged and inspired to create a sensitive and enduring place in the heart of the park for new events, performances, and community gatherings in conjunction with interpretation and commemoration of the pool closing in 1967.



Concept A: Amphitheatre is central organizing feature and destination.



Concept B: Re-opening part of vehicular access.



Concept C: Physical exercise with calibrated walking and jogging loops.

## Public Meeting #2: Presentation of History and Design Workshop

On January 24, 2008, the second public meeting was held for Riverside Park. The planning team presented the history of the park based on historical research and critical insights from the Memory Workshop and the Focus Group Meeting. After this presentation, the participants were directed to four station points, each facilitated by a team member. Participants then gave input in four major categories critical for future design decisions in the master plan. The categories included: Park Uses and Programs; Security-Access-Maintenance; Circulation-Furnishings; and Interpretation. From this meeting the planning team refined the opportunities, constraints and challenges in the planning for Riverside Park.

## Concept Alternatives

Informed by historical analysis, existing conditions and public input, the planning team developed alternative concepts for the Riverside Park Master Plan. Important considerations included:

- Historic circulation and spatial patterns that remain
- Diverse commemorative monuments and gardens in the park
- Historic tree and vegetation plantings that remain and new efforts at re-vegetation
- Historic stone structures that give the park its unique character
- Diverse structures and features scattered throughout the park
- Restricted views to the river
- Underutilization of the park except for the playground area
- Inaccessible paths
- Steep slopes and erosion problems
- Inconsistent materials and design of site amenities
- Vehicular and pedestrian conflict areas
- Significance and meaning of the pool wall ruin in the heart of the park

Three preliminary concepts were developed with some elements common to all the alternatives, but distinct differences in site organization, access and spatial hierarchy. Concept A emphasized an amphitheatre as the heart of the park and a central organizing feature and destination. Concept B addressed the option of partially re-opening the park to vehicular access by extending the entrance drive out to the stone overlook. Concept C emphasized physical exercise with calibrated walking and jogging loops of varying surfaces and lengths.





*Community participants offer ideas and thoughts about each concept alternative.*

### **Public Meeting #3: Presentation of Concepts and Public Input**

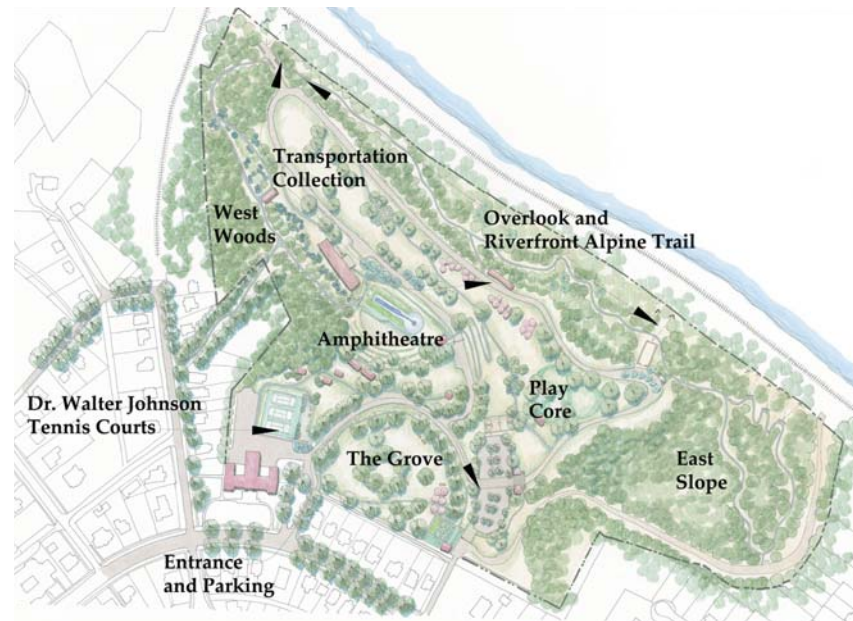
On March 20, 2008, the concepts were presented to the public and opportunities given for individual input at three station points. Team members recorded public input on each alternative and concept boards were available for individual comment and suggestions. The team then took the evaluation of the benefits and problems represented by these concepts and used this public input to inform the final master plan.

### **Public Meeting #4: Presentation of the Final Master Plan**

On June 6, 2008 the final master plan was presented to the public. After this presentation, the plan was also presented to some members of the Planning Commission and to the Lynchburg City Council on June 26, 2008.



*Circulation and Accessibility analysis diagram.*



*Master Plan and Character Areas.*







## Master Plan

### Vision and Goals

All landscapes, including parks, have complex and evolving physical features that are associated with memory, identity and meaning. Riverside Park is such a place. A master plan for this significant public gathering place must consider how to preserve the qualities and features that contribute to the park's historic significance, while introducing physical changes, new and expanded park programs and interpretation, and maintenance procedures which will keep it a vibrant, popular and successful park long into the 21st century. After gathering public input during master plan development, the following goals were established to ensure the successful future of the park. These goals are:

- *Riverside Park will provide a safe, comfortable and varied experience for all park users.*
- *Riverside Park will provide a significant number of special events that celebrate the diverse local culture and the park's history.*
- *Riverside Park will retain, preserve and interpret its historic features and picturesque landscape.*
- *Riverside Park will remain a vital part of the Rivermont neighborhood, but also be a destination for other city and regional activities.*
- *Implementation of any recommendations in the master plan will be environmentally responsible and sustainable.*
- *The principles of stewardship, shared responsibility and volunteerism among Riverside Park's friends, users, neighbors, community organizations and city government will guide implementation of the master plan.*

### Site-Wide Recommendations

- **Interpretive Plan:** Develop a comprehensive interpretive plan for Riverside Park to link various park elements and interpret its extensive natural and cultural resources.
- **Street Signage:** Install street signage to connect the park to city-wide trail systems.
- **Tree Inventory:** Develop a comprehensive tree inventory to document species, locations, sizes and conditions. Retain arborist services to remove dead trees and limbs. Begin a program for selected tree and limb removal at the overlook sites to restore viewsheds to the James River.
- **Stormwater Collection System:** Evaluate the stormwater collections system including structures, pipes and culverts and implement upgrades to alleviate safety concerns and prevent further erosion.
- **Underground Utilities:** Remove all overhead utility wires and poles and install underground. Complete a detailed assessment of the utilities and infrastructure and develop an implementation plan and program.
- **Lighting:** Develop a comprehensive lighting plan for the park.
- **Site Amenities:** Site amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, bollards, water fountains and picnic shelters will follow design guidelines for consistency in materials, color and anchor foundations.
- **Site Signage:** Develop a comprehensive site signage system for interpretation, orientation and direction, information and park regulations.
- **Path Systems:** Keep sweeping, curvilinear lines of original path design. Remove gravel paths on the cross slopes between the main pathway loop. All primary paths should be designed for the loading capacity of small trucks. Modify the primary "loop" path system to be ADA accessible.

## *Character Areas*

The following section describes the nine character areas which comprise the entirety of Riverside Park, and the range of treatments recommended for each of them. A major goal of this conceptual organization of the park is to increase overall use of the park and its resources. Defining and enhancing the character of each of these park areas, the features within them, and the means of accessing them, will invite more expansive and intensive exploration and use of the park and also contribute to the visitor's sense of orientation. The park is composed of the following character areas:

### **The Entrance and Parking Areas**

The plan expands and reconfigures parking for fewer pedestrian conflicts, visual compatibility and more shade.

### **The Grove**

This area, adjacent to the Miller-Claytor House and resident neighbors, features specimen tree plantings. A low stone barrier wall and more seating opportunities are suggested to enhance this area as a quiet place to have lunch and rest.

### **The Tennis Courts and Plaza**

The parking in this area is relocated in order to create a seating plaza which provides a better context for the plaque and tennis courts honoring Dr. Walter Johnson. The plan also develops the connections to and from these areas to the rest of the park.

### **The Amphitheatre**

The stone and concrete pool remnants and steep topography are reimagined as both a commemorative area and a performance space.

### **The Play Core**

The plan proposes a relocated, improved, universally accessible playground and a sprayground, centrally located in the "heart of the park," with inviting views of its rolling landscape.

### **The Transportation Collection**

The plan connects these park features interpretively and physically with reconfigured paths and a viewing area of the railroad trestle crossing the James River.

### **The West Woods**

The flagstone trail that winds through this area is accessed via a new pedestrian connection from Columbia Avenue and to the main park path system via a small historic stone bridge. Revitalizing remnant historic ornamental plantings is also recommended.

### **The Stone Overlook and Riverfront Alpine Trail**

This is a unique and historic feature of Riverside Park. The stone overlook will be rehabilitated and select clearing undertaken to restore glimpses of the James River.

### **The East Slope**

This remote, wooded area is used by the most intrepid of park visitors, but the plan proposes realigning the trail with switchbacks and opening up select views of the river to make it safer and more inviting.







# The Entrance and Parking Areas

The original layout of the entrance drive into the park remains, however, historically the entire asphalt loop within the park was accessible to vehicular circulation. After the park was closed to vehicles, obstacles became necessary for prohibiting access. As a result, the entrance drive and main parking area are bounded by an eclectic assortment of stone blocks, gates and wooden pickets.

The plan proposes a number of alterations to generally improve the arrival sequence for the park and its parking areas. These alterations include: reconfiguring the left turn into the Virginia School of the Arts parking areas for visibility and safety; reinforcing the boundaries of the drive and parking lot with more uniform bollards and vegetation such as hedges and trees; redesigning the layout of the parking lot so that it echoes the curve of the entrance drive; and adding vegetated islands for stormwater mitigation and shade.



Vehicles and pedestrians enter the park in its southwest corner, from Rivermont Avenue. The entrance drive leads to a large parking lot at the topographic highpoint on the ridgeline that the original vehicle loop followed. In its existing condition, the parking lot is in full sun and lacks vegetation.



The large, rectangular existing parking lot does not relate to the curving entrance drive and rolling topography of the park.

## Recommendations

### Preserve

1. Historical entrance loop.
2. Vehicular access via Ash Street only for emergency use and special events.

### Remove

3. Cluttered and eclectic driveway and parking edge materials and replace with uniform, historically compatible bollards or vegetative barriers.

### Restore

4. The formal sense of welcome, arrival and orientation to the park.

### Relocate

5. The turn-off into the parking area serving the Virginia School of the Arts.
6. The main existing parking lot, expanding and improving its layout.

### Add

7. Pull-off and loading zone for picnic shelters.
8. Plantings, including tree islands for shade in the parking lot and additional trees edging the entrance drive.
9. An information kiosk and accessible restroom facility.
10. Vehicular access to universally accessible parking at the amphitheatre and the train exhibit.





*Trees and shrubs could form vegetative barriers rather than blocks and bollards.*



*A consistent design for curbs and curb material would improve the visual quality of the circulation system.*



*A consistent palette of site amenities would improve the overall character of the park.*



# The Grove

This character area is envisioned as a contemplative outdoor room, where visitors might sit and have lunch in close proximity to their homes, the Virginia School of the Arts, and the surrounding streets.

The Grove is bounded by the original entrance drive and the alley separating the park from the historic Rivermont neighborhood. It was originally conceived as an informal arboretum with specimen tree plantings. It also provides the backdrop for the historic Miller Claytor house and gardens.

Today, the Grove is the site of aging play equipment in addition to mature trees and seating areas. Healthy, mature trees of desirable species should be protected and maintained. Any trees that may have been planted ca. 1920s - 30s should be carefully identified, labeled and inspected for their historic value.



The grove is framed by the curvilinear entrance drive and the alley adjacent to eight neighboring residences.



Clusters of cherry trees bloom in the grove in springtime; historical documents described this area as an arboretum featuring a variety of specimen trees.

## Recommendations

### Preserve

1. Historic trees of desirable species in good condition.
2. The quiet setting for adjacent neighbors and the Miller-Claytor House and garden.

### Remove

3. Unsafe or outdated existing play equipment.
4. Excessive or cluttered edging materials and obstacles.

### Restore

5. The original grade where it has eroded from play areas.
6. Turf reseeding wherever playground equipment is removed

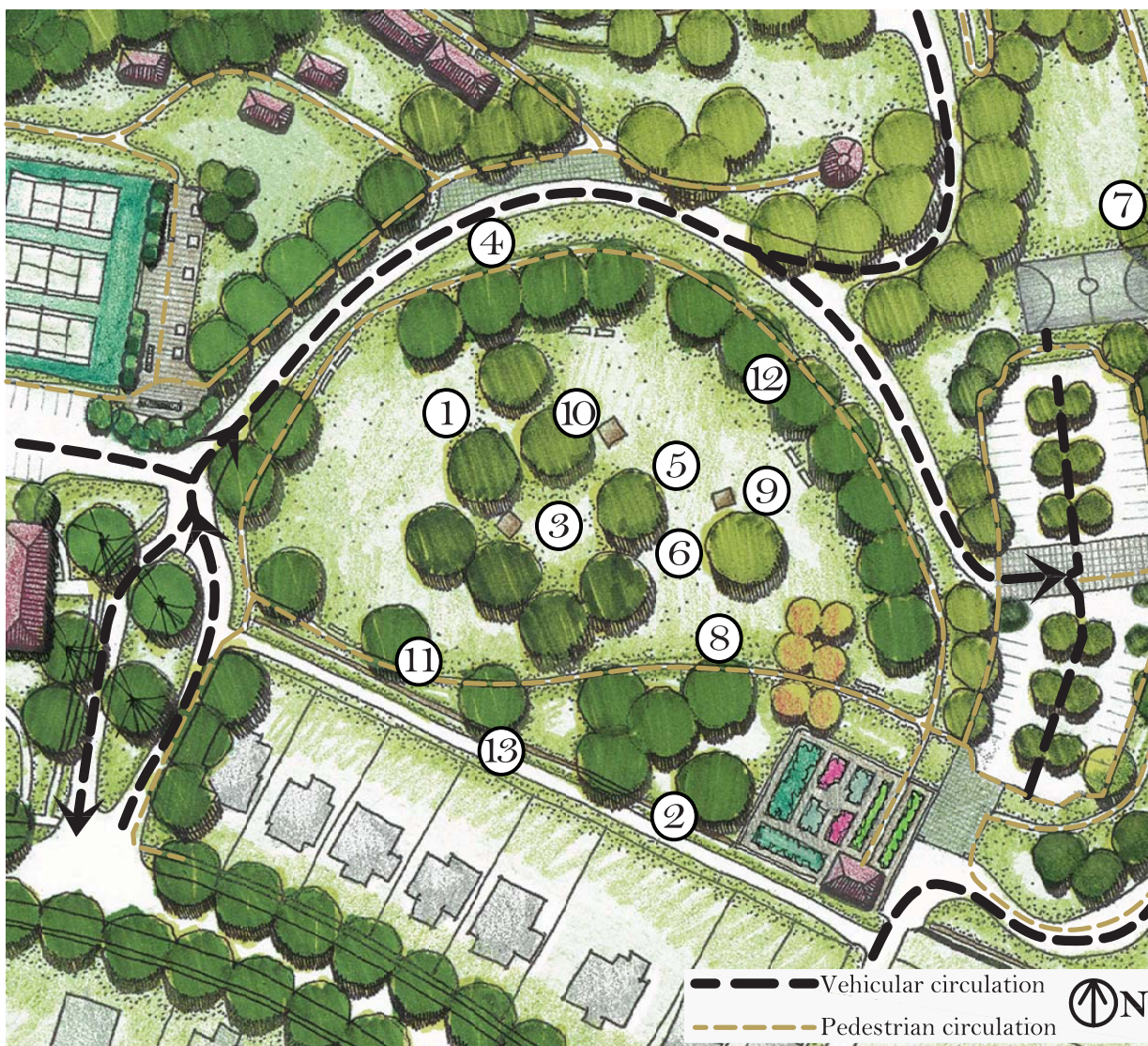
### Relocate

7. The playground to the new Play Core character area.

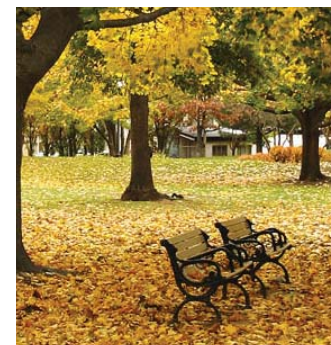
### Add

8. Additional opportunities for the Miller-Claytor House to hold outdoor receptions.
9. New site amenities, including benches and trash receptacles.
10. Sculptural play elements.
11. A new 1/4-mile, universally accessible walking loop.
12. Landscape plantings, including additional specimen trees.
13. A low stone wall along the southwest boundary separating the park from the alley.





The Grove character area is easily accessed for a quiet break. Relocating large playground equipment would enhance the setting of the Miller Claytor house as well as the neighborhood residences on the park's south side. A 1/4-mile walking loop is proposed, which could be paved with a shock-absorbing yet visually compatible material such as brown crumbed rubber.



New site amenities such as benches under trees would enhance The Grove.



A low, dry-laid stone wall is proposed, to replace the existing wood pickets that separate the park from the residential alley.



Sculptural play elements that would blend with The Grove's historic and natural setting would replace outdated equipment; contemporary playground equipment will be sited in the Play Core area.



# The Tennis Courts and Plaza

This character area, immediately to the east of the main park entrance, currently features the Dr. Walter Johnson tennis courts and commemorative marker, overflow parking, and a bus drop-off between the courts and the rest of the park. The tennis area is more visually associated with the Virginia School for the Arts and does not relate in any significant way to the park at large.

Overflow parking can be expanded and improved by relocating it west of the tennis court area. This would also create an opportunity to use the area east of the courts in a way that connects this significant feature to the rest of the park. A seating plaza in this area would create a place to observe tennis practice or matches, as well as an opportunity for looking out to the other parts of the park from its topographic high point.

The Dr. Walter Johnson stone marker could be reoriented and provided with a more formal context than its current location facing the vehicular entrance.

This character area also includes the existing picnic shelters, which are in need of rehabilitation and expansion. Accessible paths and a vehicle drop-off would improve this area.



The tennis courts are in the far southwest corner of the park. This area also includes the picnic area on the ridge west of the entrance drive.



The Dr. Walter Johnson marker would be better appreciated as part of a new seating plaza where there is an existing asphalt parking lot (seen in background).

## Recommendations

### Preserve

1. The tennis courts and plaque honoring Dr. Walter Johnson.

### Remove

2. Parking currently on the east side of the tennis courts.

### Restore

3. The condition of the tennis courts, as necessary.
4. The picnic area with new covered, accessible shelters.

### Relocate

5. Parking to a new area on the west side of the tennis courts.
6. The stone marker honoring Dr. Walter Johnson to be part of the new seating plaza.

### Add

7. A seating plaza on the east side of the tennis courts.
8. New site amenities such as benches, tables, trash receptacles and a water fountain.
9. A rain garden to filter run-off from the parking areas.
10. Accessible walkways that connect the tennis courts, parking areas, plaza and shelters.





The Tennis Courts and Plaza area would feature expanded overflow parking, accessible paths, a seating plaza, and a refurbished picnic area.



The area west of the tennis courts, above, is proposed as a new expanded overflow parking area.



Refurbished picnic shelters should feature a rustic or other aesthetically compatible style.



Site amenities such as outdoor chess tables would enhance the tennis court seating plaza.



# The Amphitheatre

The painted concrete and stone remnants of the former ca. 1920s-era public pool at Riverside Park sit at the bottom of a steep slope that forms a natural amphitheatre.

The plan programs this topographic feature of the park into an area that could host public talks, community celebrations and special events.

The foundation of the former pool could also become an area that is commemorated and interpreted. Its rectangular shape is conducive to a design that features a walkway and prospect of a terminal feature at the end, such as a sculpture, fountain, or shallow, narrow reflecting pool.

The concrete and stone remnants, where not stabilized, could be buffered with perennial plantings, for ornamental value and to discourage visitors from physically sitting or climbing upon them.



*The Amphitheatre character area makes use of the head of the ravine and topographic "bowl" in which the public swimming pool was sited as part of Riverside Park's original design. The pool was spring-fed and drained into the ravine through the Old-Fashioned Garden.*



*Remnants of the former swimming pool are evocative. It is natural for visitors to wonder about the appearance and function of these retaining walls. Interpreting and commemorating this area is a rich opportunity.*

## Recommendations

### Preserve

1. The concrete and flagstone remnants of the former pool as a commemorative site.

### Remove

2. Undesirable or unhealthy trees on the slope.

### Restore

3. The stone gazebo.

### Add

4. An open-air amphitheatre for community events, talks, and performances.
5. Perennial plantings to border and discourage visitors from physically accessing the stabilized stone and concrete remnants.
6. A sculpture, water feature or other commemorative element to the pool area.
7. Vehicular access to a loading zone and accessible parking.
8. A graded accessible, switchback path to the Play Core area.
9. Trees suitable for providing shade within the amphitheatre.





The Amphitheatre character area would be a new park feature that could become a destination for events encompassing a range of scales, from small, informal educational talks to large, public summer concerts.



The pool remnants are evocative and should not be removed or altered.



Stepped stone retaining walls would formalize seating on the slope and trees could be retained and added for shade.



A water feature could commemorate the former pool area.



# The Play Core

The Play Core would be a new character area in the park in the location of the existing basketball court, creating a space for more organized, supervised play far from any vehicular-pedestrian conflicts and from neighboring residents.

The Play Core would animate the “heart of the park” and would feature clear site lines to and from many of its other character areas, inviting further exploration.

Site features in the new Play Core would include equipment appropriate for a range of ages and for universal accessibility. There would also be an area designated for a sprayground.

The basketball court would be relocated next to the expanded parking lot, where its run-off could be incorporated into the stormwater mitigation associated with the parking lot.



*The Play Core character area, in the center of the park, would become a designated area for contemporary playground equipment.*



*The area designated for the Play Core is the current site of the basketball court, which would be relocated. It is on a high point with clear site lines to many other areas of the park.*

## Recommendations

### Preserve

1. The long vista across the park to the west.

### Remove

2. The existing basketball court.

### Add

3. A basketball court on the north side of the new parking lot.
4. Universally accessible playground equipment compatible with the park aesthetically, such as metallic or earth-toned and sculptural forms.
5. Group play equipment in clusters for appropriate age ranges.
6. A sprayground.
7. Shade trees.
8. A large, sheltered seating area and other site amenities such as benches, water fountains, and trash receptacles.





Playground equipment in the Play Core would be organized in clusters appropriate for different age ranges, and would also include sprayground equipment.



A large covered shelter would anchor the Play Core and be accessible from the main parking lot.



Playground equipment would include universally accessible features.



Water play elements that do not require lifeguards are increasingly becoming a popular attraction at municipal parks.



# The Transportation Collection

Although it has not been previously referred to as such, over time Riverside Park has amassed what can be thought of as a collection of features associated with historical modes of transportation, including the packet boat *Marshall*, the Fink deck truss bridge, and a train exhibit that is currently being restored.

The plan proposes creating a circuit that formalizes this collection by adding a seating area in the far northwest corner of the park for viewing the extraordinary railroad trestle crossing the James River nearby. The Bicentennial Garden, while not directly related, is centrally located and could become an interpretive hub.



*A collection of elements associated with historic modes of transportation is scattered in the northwest area of the park and comprise the new proposed character area called "The Transportation Collection."*



*The train exhibit is currently being restored and will include a new overhead shelter and an accessible overlook from the north slope above the train.*

## Recommendations

### Preserve

1. The historical transportation-themed elements that have been collected at the park; the packet boat *Marshall*, train cars, and truss bridge.

### Remove

2. The chain link fence that surrounds the train, after the new shelter is completed.

### Restore

3. The Bicentennial Garden and consider adding an interpretive feature that relates to the transportation collection.

### Add

4. A shelter for the train exhibit.
5. An accessible overlook for viewing the train exhibit.
6. A new paved overlook for sitting and viewing the railroad trestle and river, that connects to the Alpine Trail.
7. A new path system that connects the train exhibit and truss bridge with the Alpine Trail, using the remnant stone bridge from the ca. 1920s Old-Fashioned Garden.

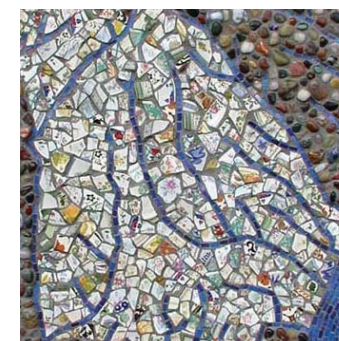




The plan proposes adding a railroad trestle viewing area and including the Bicentennial Garden in the Transportation Collection interpretive loop.



The railroad trestle is a prominent visual feature that should be seen by park visitors.



A mosaic depicting the James River is an example of an interpretive element that could be incorporated into the Bicentennial Garden to connect it to the Transportation Collection.



Plantings in the Bicentennial Garden could incorporate more lush perennial borders and flowering shrubs.



# The West Woods

The wooded area comprising the west boundary of Riverside Park includes a ravine which is encircled by sections of the flagstone-paved Alpine Trail.

In the woods are clusters of invasive plant species, such as bamboo, as well as ornamental plant remnants from the Old-Fashioned Garden, into which the pool drained during the 1920s and 30s.

Changes proposed to the area primarily concern opportunities for access, such as realigning the trail to join the trestle overlook and adding a connection to Memphis Avenue that could become a more convenient access point into the park from Randolph College. A connection between the trail and the transportation collection could incorporate a refurbished, small stone bridge also remaining from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century garden.



The West Woods is a natural area buffering the park from neighboring residents on Columbia Avenue.



The West Woods is a character area that features the Alpine Trail's unique flagstones.

## Recommendations

### Preserve

1. The flagstone paving portions of the trail.
2. Remnant ornamental plantings such as rhodendrons and pieris.

### Remove

3. Invasive species and downed trees and wood in the ravine.
4. Vegetation along Memphis Avenue to prepare for a trail connecting the west side of the park to the neighborhood and Randolph College.

### Restore

5. The small, historic stone bridge and use it to connect the trail to the transportation collection path.

### Relocate

6. The northwest end of the trail to meet the new trestle overlook farther away from the chainlink perimeter fence.

### Add

7. Additional water bars along the trail where needed.
8. An information and orientation sign at the new entrance from Memphis Avenue.





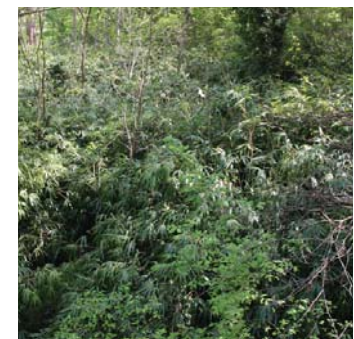
The West Woods character area could be accessed by means of a new pedestrian entrance on the west side of the park.



Ferns and spring-flowering perennials will continue to thrive if invasive species are managed.



The plan retains a small stone bridge that is remnant from the ca. 1920s Old-Fashioned Garden.



Invasive plant species need to be removed and controlled in this area, including the bamboo stand southeast of the truss bridge.



# *The Stone Overlook and Riverfront Alpine Trail*

This character area can be considered Riverside Park's namesake, as it consists of a large historic stone overlook and a trail that follows the riverside. Features of this character area require stabilization, rehabilitation and protection.

Few changes are proposed to this area. As part of the work undertaken to stabilize and rehabilitate the stone overlook, it is recommended that access be reconfigured for universal accessibility. A realignment of the trail on its west end, moving it farther away from the chainlink perimeter fence and railroad trestle is also proposed. Lastly, opportunities to access and exit the Alpine Trail near the packet boat *Marshall* or other areas should be clearly interpreted with orientation signs and welcoming thresholds.



*The historic stone overlook is one of the park's most beloved features and the Alpine Trail follows the river the entire length of the park.*



*The Alpine Trail is paved with flagstones laid by City Farm labor in the 1930s.*

## *Recommendations*

### **Preserve**

1. The historic stone overlook.
2. The flagstone Alpine Trail.

### **Remove**

3. Invasive species and unhealthy or dead trees.

### **Restore**

4. The historic stone overlook.
5. The Alpine Trail, stabilizing flagstones and guardrails and addressing erosion problems.
6. The trail connection to the packet boat *Marshall* and add an orientation sign.
7. Views of the river with select tree clearing and limbing.

### **Relocate**

8. The Alpine Trail at its west end to connect to the new trestle overlook.

### **Add**

9. Universal access to the stone overlook.

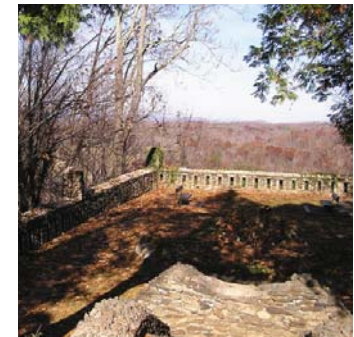




Changes proposed to this character area only concern stabilization and rehabilitation of its features, improving its points of access, and restoring selected views of the river.



The steps on the Alpine Trail's west end could be relocated to place them farther away from the trestle.



Views from the stone overlook need to be restored with select tree thinning and limbing.



The stone overlook is in need of stabilization.



# The East Slope

The East Slope character area is a topographically steep, forested ravine. Presently, a loop trail circumnavigates the slope. It is an unpaved trail with narrow shoulders in many places that drop off along the riverside bluffs. The trail itself is steep enough to be used only by the most agile and intrepid park visitors.

This character area also includes Treasure Island Road, which leads to the now missing bridge that accessed the former Y.M.C.A. camp located on an island in the James River. Remnants of the bridge are still evident in the river and the road now culminates in a dead-end. Despite its steep descent, visitors enjoy walking down this road, which is shaded by a canopy of mature tulip poplars.

The East Slope trail can be made more inviting and navigable by realigning it to include switchbacks, adding guard rails and waterbars, managing invasive plant species, and selectively clearing views along the river.



*The East Slope character area forms the park's east boundary and includes Treasure Island Road. This road is closed to public vehicles but provides strategic access to the James River for emergency personnel.*



*The existing loop trail within the East Slope character area is very steep and its narrow shoulders are eroding along the riverside bluffs.*

## Recommendations

### Preserve

1. The forested area on the east slope of the park.

### Remove

2. Select trees and limbs to open views of the James River.

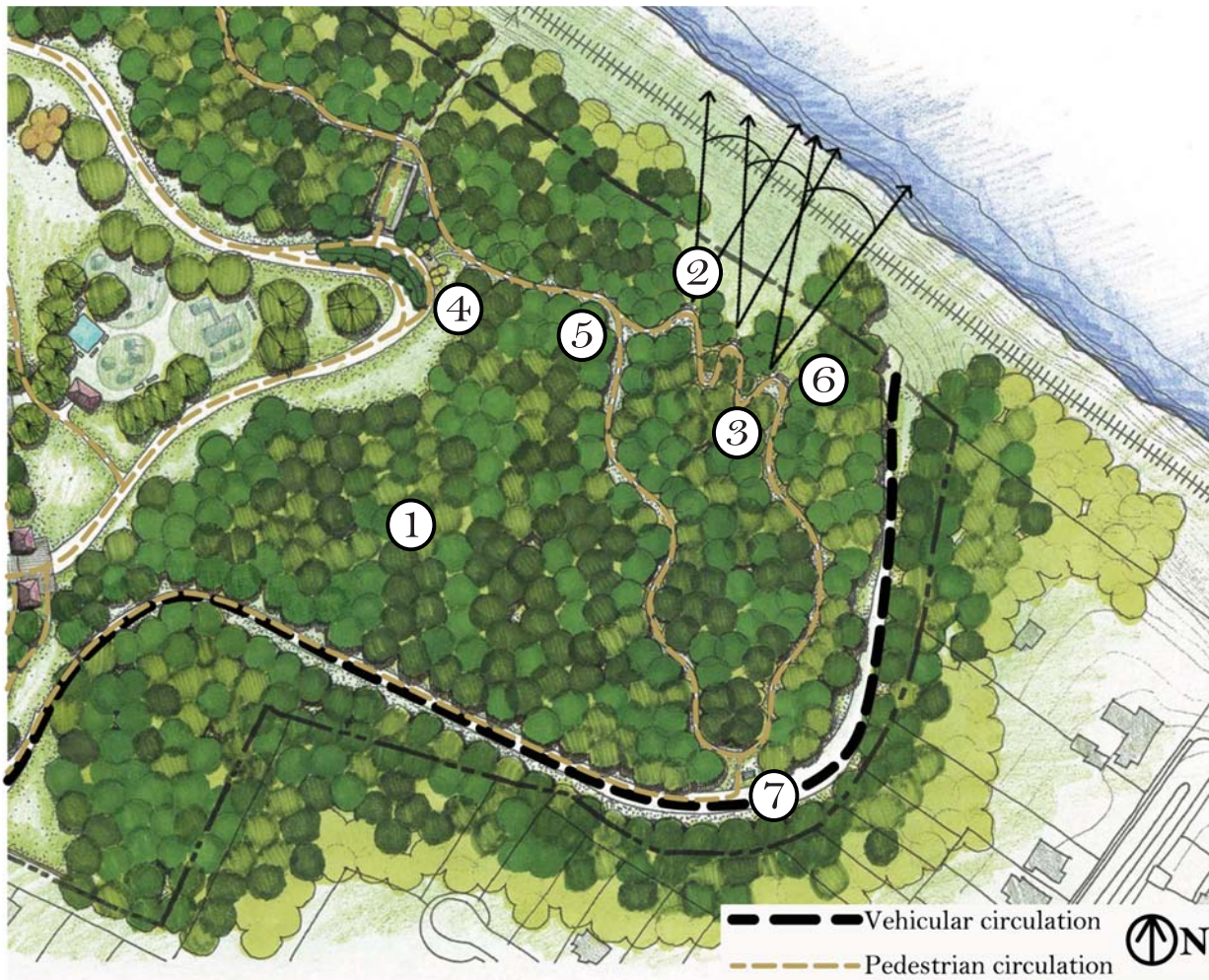
### Relocate

3. The layout of the trail, incorporating switchbacks in steep areas.

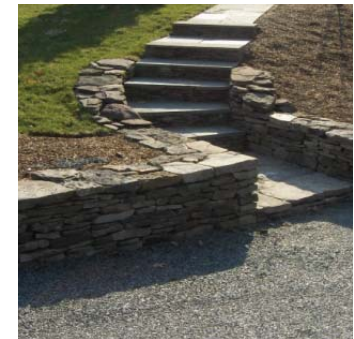
### Add

4. A more formal entrance to the trail, using stone to make it compatible with the stone overlook nearby.
5. Wayfinding and interpretive signs.
6. Guard rails where the trail approaches the steep bluff.
7. A formal access point from Treasure Island Road, with an orientation sign.





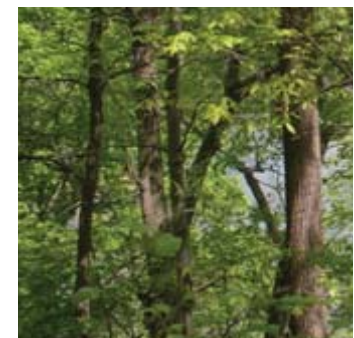
The East Slope features a loop trail that is very steep and needs to be realigned with switchbacks and possibly guard rails.



The trailhead is adjacent to the stone overlook and could be integrated into its rehabilitated design with a stone entrance, such as above.



Where the trail follows the bluffs it may need to be stabilized. Riprap is one option, as shown.



Glimpses of the James River are afforded by the East Slope trail but could be enhanced with select tree clearing and limbing.







## *Introduction*

The master plan recommendations proposed for Riverside Park will take time and funding to complete. Breakdown of the project into distinct phases allows for targeted fundraising campaigns and a strategy for construction implementation. Phasing for the master plan focuses mainly on the physical changes to the park which require extensive construction and potential site disturbance. Programmatic elements are addressed, but do not require extensive physical changes to park structures, circulation, infrastructure or vegetation. The phasing strategy also includes project opportunities for community groups and organizations.



*The Miller-Clayor house. This park entrance will be restricted to emergency use only.*



*Select tree limbing and clearing would improve views of the striking railroad trestle that crosses the James River.*



*Flagstones are a signature of the trails in Riverside Park and should be preserved.*



## *Phase I*

Phase I of the master plan contains various park-wide renovations and infrastructure work. There are also project sites targeted for funding by community groups or organizations. New design elements are also introduced in Phase I after removal of outdated or unsafe park amenities.

- **Interpretive Plan:** Develop a comprehensive interpretive plan for Riverside Park to link all the various park elements and interpret its extensive natural and cultural resources.
- **Street Signage:** Install street signage to connect the park to city-wide trail systems.
- **Train Shed:** Construct the train shed as part of the Lynchburg Kiwanis “Save the Train” project.
- **Stone Overlook:** Restore/Stabilize the stone overlook and consider adding universal accessibility.
- **Tree Inventory:** Develop a comprehensive tree inventory to document tree species, location, size and condition. Retain arborist services to remove dead trees and limbs. Begin a program for selected tree and limb removal at the overlook sites to restore viewsheds to the James River.
- **Stormwater Collection System:** Evaluate the stormwater collection system including structures, pipes and culverts and implement upgrades to alleviate safety concerns and prevent further erosion.
- **Underground Utilities:** Remove all overhead utility wires and poles and install underground.
- **Pedestrian Walkway Loop:** Re-engineer specified areas of the major pedestrian walkway for universal accessibility.
- **Existing cross-slope Paths:** Demolish existing paths on the cross slope in the interior of the major pedestrian walkway loop and stabilize slopes.
- **Stone Gazebo:** Repair/restore the stone gazebo to meet code requirements. Any rehabilitation to the structure should follow the guidelines of the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. This allows for the process of returning the structure to a useful state through repairs or alterations while retaining significant historic features.
- **Pool Walls and Remnants:** Clean out excess stones and debris from the pool ruins and designate any areas of the wall or pool edge for repair or stabilization.
- **Bicentennial Garden:** Design and install improvements to the garden.
- **Existing Play Structures in the Grove:** Remove existing play structures from the Grove that do not meet consumer product safety guidelines.
- **Existing Basketball Court:** Remove existing basketball court. Construct the new basketball court at the north end of the new parking lot.
- **Playground, Sprayground, and Shelter:** Construct the new playground, sprayground, and shelter in the Play Core area of the park.



## *Phase II*

Phase II of the master plan includes the development of three major features in the park: the Dr. Walter Johnson Tennis Courts; the amphitheater and stage; and the design and interpretation of the pool area and stone walls. Access to the large parking lot will not be obstructed during this phase.

- **Dr. Walter Johnson Tennis Courts:** Projects in this area include: demolition of existing parking lot to the east of the court; reconfiguration of the intersection of the access road and parking entrance; construction of new parking lot to the west of the tennis courts; construction of new “plaza” area east of the tennis courts; refurbishment and reorientation of the Dr. Johnson memorial and addition of site amenities such as benches, chess tables, trash receptacles and additional plantings.
- **Existing Features in the Area:** Remove existing picnic shelters and information board including gravel and timber bases.
- **Picnic Shelters and Bases:** Construct new picnic shelters and bases.
- **Amphitheater:** Construct new amphitheater and stage in the hillside overlooking the pool.
- **Pool area and stone remnants:** Design and interpret the pool area ruin in two parts: 1) seating and stage and 2) commemoration and interpretation.
- **Vacant Lot:** Clear the lot contiguous to the park on Columbia Avenue to prepare for trail construction connecting the park to the neighborhood and Randolph College campus.
- **Alpine Trail:** Stabilize and refurbish the Alpine Trail in the West Woods area of the park. Stabilize and refurbish the Alpine Trail at the overlook and riverfront area.
- **Alpine Trail:** Design new switchbacks and provide guardrails for the Alpine Trail in the East Slope area of the park for safety purposes and opportunities for new vistas to the river.

## *Phase III*

Phase III of the master plan will affect the existing parking and circulation. The park may be closed to vehicular traffic during some of this demolition and construction. Also during major construction, portions of the park will be closed to the public.

- **Existing Parking Lot:** Demolish the existing parking lot.
- **Existing Vehicular Entry Road:** Reconfigure the layout of the entrance road including: construction of a pull-off for the picnic area; construction of a small parking pull-off at the amphitheater; construction of a small parking pull-off about the train shed; and removal of the road segment from the existing parking lot to the Miller Claytor house.
- **New Parking Lot:** Construct the new parking lot.
- **Park Structures:** Construct new park structures adjacent to the parking lot, including the restroom and interpretive kiosk.
- **Paths:** Construct connector paths and new paths in the interior of the major pedestrian walkway loop for accessibility.
- **Site Amenities:** Install new site amenities including benches, trash receptacles, bollards and water fountain.



## *Phase IV*

Phase IV of the master plan focuses on the Grove area, the overlooks, access to the train and path connections to Randolph College. The park should remain open to vehicular traffic and all visitors during this phase of construction.

- **Existing Play Equipment:** Remove remainder of play equipment and bases from the Grove, stabilize soils and add plantings.
- **Site Amenities:** Remove existing site amenities from the Grove. Install new site amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, bollards and water fountains.
- **Perimeter Path:** Construct the new perimeter path around the Grove.
- **Dry Stone Wall:** Construct the new dry stone wall that defines the park edge between the Grove and the alley behind the neighborhood houses.
- **Overlook:** Design and construct the new overlook for viewing the train trestle.
- **Entrance:** Design and construct a new platform entrance to the train.
- **Trail:** Construct the trail through the vacant lot allowing direct access to Randolph College and connect to the Alpine Trail.

## *Phase V*

Phase V of the master plan includes work on the Alpine Trail, site amenities and comprehensive signage and lighting throughout the park. There would be site disturbances due to the extent of infrastructure work.

- **Trails and Plantings:** Construct new trails and restore ornamental plantings in the West Woods.
- **Bollards:** Remove all wooden and “wall cap” bollards and replace with recommended bollards where necessary.
- **Site Amenities:** Install the last of the new site amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, bollards and water fountains.
- **Signage:** Install a comprehensive signage system for the entire park including interpretive signage as designated by an Interpretive Plan for the park.
- **Lighting:** Install a comprehensive lighting system for the entire park.

## Phase I Estimate of Probable Cost

• Develop a comprehensive Interpretive Plan for Riverside Park.....	\$80,000.00
• Install street signage for connection from the park to existing trails and trail systems.....	\$25,000.00
• Construct the Train Shed.....	<i>Funding in Place</i>
• Restore/Stabilize the stone overlook and possibly re-engineer for universal accessibility.....	\$500,000.00
• Develop a tree inventory and retain arborist services to remove dead trees and limbs and begin a program for selected tree and limb removal at the overlook sites to restore the views.....	\$75,000.00
• Evaluate storm water collection system including structures, pipes and culverts and implement upgrades to alleviate safety concerns.....	\$200,000.00
• Underground utilities.....	\$250,000.00
• Re-engineer specified areas of the major pedestrian walkway for universal accessibility.....	\$100,000.00
• Demolish existing paths on the cross slope as specified in the interior of the major pedestrian walkway loop and stabilize slopes .....	\$75,000.00
• Repair stone gazebo.....	<i>Funding in Place</i>
• Clean out excess stones and debris from the pool ruins and designate and repair any area of the wall or pool edge for repair or stabilization.....	\$75,000.00
• Design and install improvements to garden in center of transportation collection.....	\$45,000
• Remove play structures from The Grove that do not meet consumer product safety guidelines.....	\$1,000.00
• Demolish the existing basketball court.....	\$5,000.00
• Construct the proposed playground.....	\$85,000.00
• Construct the proposed pavilion shelter in the Play Core.....	\$150,000.00
• Construct the proposed sprayground in the Play Core.....	<i>Junior League Funding</i>
• Plant new shade trees.....	\$35,000.00
• Install new benches, bollards and trash receptacles where necessary.....	\$35,000.00
• Construct new paths in the interior of the major pedestrian walkway loop (Universal accessible surfacing) 1500 lf.....	\$75,000.00
Total Phase I.....	\$1,811,000.00



## *Phase II Estimate of Probable Cost*

• Design and reconstruct the Dr. Walter Johnson tennis courts area. <i>Including:</i>	
• Demolition of existing parking lot to the east of the courts.....	\$35,000.00
• Reconfiguration of the intersection of the access road and parking entrance.....	\$80,000.00
• Construction of new parking lot west of the tennis courts.....	\$75,000.00
• Construction of new “plaza” area east of the tennis courts.....	\$75,000.00
• Refurbishment of the Dr. Johnson memorial.....	\$10,000.00
• Addition of site amenities, such as benches, chess tables, trash receptacles, and additional plantings.....	\$80,000.00
• Remove existing picnic shelters and information board including gravel and timber bases.....	\$10,000.00
• Construct new picnic shelters and bases	
• Three small shelters .....	\$150,000.00
• Two large shelters.....	\$200,000.00
• Design and interpret the pool area ruin.....	\$150,000.00
• Clear paper street lot to prepare for constructing a trail to connect the park to the neighborhood and the Randolph College campus.....	\$10,000.00
• Plant trees.....	\$50,000.00
Total Phase II	\$925,000.00

## *Phase III Estimate of Probable Cost*

• Demolish the existing parking lot.....	\$50,000.00
• Reconfigure the vehicular entrance drive.....	\$250,000.00
<i>Including:</i>	
• Construction of a pull-off for the picnic area	
• Construction of a small parking pull-off at the amphitheater	
• Construction of a small parking pull-off above the train shed	
• Reconfiguration and removal of the entrance road segment from the existing parking lot to the Miller Claytor house	
• Align entrance drive with proposed parking lot	
• Construct the new parking lot.....	\$200,000.00
• Construct the park structures adjacent to the parking lot. <i>Including:</i>	
• Restroom.....	\$175,000.00
• Interpretive kiosk.....	\$80,000.00
• New basketball court at the north end of the parking lot.....	\$50,000.00
• Connector paths.....	\$40,000.00
• Removal of existing site amenities.....	\$1,000.00
• Installation of new site amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, bollards and water fountains.....	\$55,000.00
• Plant trees.....	\$40,000.00
Total Phase III	\$941,000.00

### *Phase IV Estimate of Probable Cost*

• Remove remainder of play equipment and bases from The Grove, stabilize the soils and add plantings.....	\$25,000.00
• Remove existing site amenities from The Grove.....	\$15,000.00
• Construct a new perimeter path in The Grove.....	\$75,000.00
• Construct the dry stone wall that forms the park edge to the Neighborhood.....	\$100,000.00
• Design and construct a new overlook for viewing the train trestle.....	\$75,000.00
• Design and construct a new platform entrance to the train.....	\$80,000.00
• Construct trail to Randolph College and connect to the Alpine Trail.....	\$40,000.00
• Install new site amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, bollards and water fountains.....	\$40,000.00
• Plant Trees.....	\$30,000.00

Total Phase IV	\$480,000.00
----------------	--------------

### *Phase V Estimate of Probable Cost*

• Refurbish and stabilize the Alpine Trail in the West Woods area of the park.....	\$75,000.00
• Construct new trails in the area of the Fink deck truss bridge and the small stone bridge.....	\$75,000.00
• Restore ornamental plantings in the ravine.....	\$25,000
• Repair and stabilize the Alpine Trail at the stone overlook and along the riverfront.....	\$100,000.00
• Design new switchbacks and provide guardrails for the Alpine Trail in the East Slope area.....	\$75,000.00
• Selectively clear woodland for new vistas.....	\$90,000.00
• Remove all wooden and “wall cap” bollards and replace with recommended bollards.....	\$50,000.00
• Remove any existing site amenities.....	\$2,500.00
• Install site amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, bollards, and water fountains.....	\$40,000.00
• Install a comprehensive signage system for the entire park.....	\$75,000.00
• Install interpretive signage as designated by the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan.....	\$100,000.00
• Install comprehensive lighting systems throughout the park.....	\$150,000.00

Total Phase V	\$857,500.00
---------------	--------------

### *Total Project Estimate of Probable Cost*

• Project Total.....	\$5,014,500.00
• Mobilization, Bonds, Permits @ 15% of total.....	\$752,175.00
Subtotal.....	\$5,766,675.00
• Design Fees @ 10% of total.....	\$576,668.00
• Design Contingency @ 15% of total.....	\$865,001.00

Estimated Project Total	\$7,208,344.00
-------------------------	----------------



## Endnotes

1. Darrell Laurant, *A City Unto Itself: Lynchburg, Virginia in the Twentieth Century* (Lynchburg, VA: Darrell Laurant, 1997), 3-5.
2. Lynchburg Sesqui-Centennial Association, *The Saga of a City: Lynchburg, Virginia* (Lynchburg, VA: The Lynchburg Sesqui-Centennial Association, 1936), 20-21.
3. Douglas MacLeod, ““Queen of the James River & Kanawha Canal” The Packet Boat Marshall,” in *Lynch’s Ferry*. Spring/Summer 2002: 4.
4. Thomas G. Ledford, “A Short History of Lynchburg’s Railroads,” in *Lynch’s Ferry*. Spring/Summer 2002: 32.
5. S. Allen Chambers, *Lynchburg: An Architectural History* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1991): 115.
6. Robert P. Merchant, “The Discovery of Judge William Daniel’s Overseer’s Place,” in *Lynch’s Ferry*, Spring/Summer 1995: 40.
7. T.G. Hobbs, Jr., “Records of Smallpox Hospital and Other Hospitals.” Manuscript. PAM 2835, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA. August 1991: 4-5.
8. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1885.
9. Hobbs 1991: 8.
10. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1908: 104.
11. Hobbs 1991: 11.
12. Hobbs 1991: 11.
13. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1912: 150; City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1916: 77.
14. Chambers 1991: 296.
15. Chambers 1991: 305.
16. Chambers 1991: 302.
17. Chambers 1991: 305.
18. Harold E. Cox, *Hill City Trolleys: Street Railways of Lynchburg, VA* (Forty Fort, PA, Harold E. Cox, 1977), 89.
19. Cox 1977: 22.
20. Chambers 1991: 437.
21. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1903: 93.
22. Hobbs 1991: 16-17.
23. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1910: 160-161.
24. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1919: 163.
25. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1912: 182.
26. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1913: 186.
27. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1914.
28. Chambers 1991: 437.
29. C. R. MacKan to City Manager Beck, 1 April 1922, City Manager Records, Lynchburg, VA.
30. Amherst County Deed Book 64: 114.
31. Gene W. Tomlin, *The History of the Y.M.C.A. in Central Virginia* (Warwick House Publishing, Lynchburg, Virginia, 2006): 124-125.
32. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1923: 69.
33. Tomlin 2006: 126.
34. Amherst County Deed Book 199: 111.
35. Tomlin 2006: 116-117.
36. “Newly Developed Riverside Park in Attractive Setting,” *Lynchburg News*, 10 June 1923.
37. Robert P. Merchant, “Lynchburg’s City Farm,” in *Lynch’s Ferry*, Fall 1996/Winter 1997: 37-40.
38. “Open Riverside Park Pool Today,” *Lynchburg News*, 9 August 1921.
39. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1924: 62.
40. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1926: 83.
41. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1925: 66.
42. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1926: 83.
43. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1927: 85.
44. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1930: 94.
45. Letter, George Reed to City Manager R.W.B. Hart. 28 April 1949, City Manager Records, Lynchburg, VA.
46. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1929: 93.
47. Letter, Mrs. C.G. Craddock, PTA President, to City Manager R.W.B. Hart, 4 May 1929, City of Lynchburg

- Annual Report, 1930: 94.
48. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1930: 94.
  49. R. W. B. Hart, city manager, to George Reed, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry, 20 January 1932. PAM 3064, Jones Memorial Library.
  50. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1933, 1934.
  51. George Reed, Superintendent of Park Forestry Dept., to R. F. Wagner, Director, Public Works, Lynchburg, 4 May 1935. PAM 3064, Jones Memorial Library.
  52. Chambers 1991: 488.
  53. Lynchburg Garden Club records.
  54. MacLeod 2002: 5-7.
  55. "A Mighty Oak," *Lynchburg Daily Advance*, 17 September 1958.
  56. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1940.
  57. Petition from the Little Garden Club of Lynchburg to Mayor and Lynchburg City Council, April 1960. City Manager Records, Lynchburg, Virginia.
  58. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1945.
  59. City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1942.
  60. Letter from Junior Chamber of Commerce Chairman W.H. Nowlin to George Reed, 28 February 1949. City Manager Records, Lynchburg, VA.
  61. "Riverside Park Needs Big Broom – And It'll Get One," *Lynchburg News*, 27 August 1953.
  62. Ruskin S. Freer, *The Lynchburg News*. 5 April 1959.
  63. MacLeod 2002: 8.
  64. "Steam Train for Lynchburg," in *Ties*, August 1962.
  65. "Rail Units Are Dedicated At Transportation Park," *Lynchburg News*, 20 July 1962.
  66. Robert D. Morrison (City Manager) to Council, City of Lynchburg, 14 April 1964. PAM 3064, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.
  67. History & Heritage of Civil Engineering, "Fink Deck Truss Bridge," <<http://live.asce.org/hh/index.mxml?lid=67>> (accessed 3 September 2008).
  68. *The Lynchburg News*, 5 July 1961.
  69. Walter Fore, Kenneth Oglesby, and Leroy Franklin, Interview, Lynchburg, VA, 4 January 2008.
  70. "Newly Developed Riverside Park in Attractive Setting," *Lynchburg News*, 10 June 1923.
  71. "The 14th Annual Black Liberation Day, May 24, 1986," program, collection of Walter Fore, Lynchburg, VA.
  72. Desiree Ferguson, Interview at Riverside Park Memory Workshop, Lynchburg, VA, 8 November 2007.
  73. Francoise Watts, Interview at Riverside Park Memory Workshop, Lynchburg, Virginia, 8 November 2007.
  74. The Stonewall Procession: From Rail to Water – Lynchburg's Tribute to a Fallen Hero. <<http://www.lyncburghhistoricalfoundation.org/stonewall/index.php>> (accessed 24 October 2007).



# Bibliography

## Books

- Chambers, S. Allen. *Lynchburg: An Architectural History*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1991.
- Cox, Harold E. *Hill City Trolleys: Street Railways of Lynchburg*. VA. Forty Fort, PA: Harold E. Cox, 1977.
- Kennedy, Frances H., ed. *The Civil War Battlefield Guide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Arlington, VA: The Conservation Fund, 1998.
- Laurant, Darrell. *A City Unto Itself: Lynchburg, Virginia in the Twentieth Century*. Lynchburg, VA: Darrell Laurant, 1997
- Tomlin, Gene W. *The History of the Y.M.C.A. in Central Virginia*. Lynchburg, VA: Warwick House Publishing, 2006.

## Periodicals and Newspapers

- “A Mighty Oak.” *Lynchburg Daily Advance*. 17 September 1958.
- Freer, Ruskin S. *The Lynchburg News*. 5 April 1959.
- Hantman, Jeffrey, L. “Monacan Archeology and History.” *Lynch's Ferry* Spring/Summer (1992):7.
- Ledford, Thomas G. “A Short History of Lynchburg's Railroads.” *Lynch's Ferry* Spring/Summer (2002):32.
- MacLeod, Douglas. “‘Queen of the James River & Kanawha Canal’ The Packet Boat Marshall.” *Lynch's Ferry* Spring/Summer (2002): 4.
- Merchant, Robert P. “Lynchburg's City Farm.” *Lynch's Ferry* Fall /Winter (1997):37-40
- Merchant, Robert P. “The Discovery of Judge William Daniel's Overseer's Place.” *Lynch's Ferry* Spring/Summer (1995): 40.
- “Newly Developed Riverside Park in Attractive Setting.” *Lynchburg News*. 10 June 1923.
- “Open Riverside Park Pool Today,” *Lynchburg News*. 9 August 1921.
- “Rail Units Are Dedicated At Transportation Park.” *Lynchburg News*. 20 July 1962.
- “Riverside Park Needs Big Broom – And It'll Get One.” *Lynchburg News*. 27 August 1953

“Steam Train for Lynchburg.” *Ties*. August, 1962

*The Lynchburg News*, 5 July 1961.

## Government Documents

- Blaunton, Alison Stone Blanton. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Rivermont Historic District, VDHR File # 118-0334, 2002.
- City of Lynchburg Annual Reports: 1885,1903,1908,1910,1912, 1913,1914,1916,1919,1923, 1924,1925,1926,1927,1929,1930,1933,1940,1942,1945,1947,1949.
- Petition from the Little Garden Club of Lynchburg to Mayor and Lynchburg City Council. Lynchburg. VA: City Manager Records, April 1960.
- Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission. National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Form: Miller-Claytor House, 1975.

## Letters and Archived Materials

- Craddock, C.G., PTA President, to City Manager R.W.B. Hart. Letter. 4 May 1929, City of Lynchburg Annual Report, 1930.
- Hart, R. W. B., City Manager, to George Reed, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry. Letter. 20 January 1932. PAM 3064, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.
- Hobbs, Jr., T.G. “Records of Smallpox Hospital and Other Hospitals.” Manuscript. PAM 2835, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA. August, 1991.
- Lynchburg Garden Club records
- Lynchburg Sesqui-Centennial Association. *The Saga of a City: Lynchburg, Virginia*. Lynchburg, VA: The Lynchburg Sesqui-Centennial Association, 1936.
- MacKam, C.R. to City Manager Beck. Letter. City Manager Records, Lynchburg, VA: 1 April 1922. Amherst County Deed Book 64:114, Book 199:111
- Morrison, Robert D. (City Manager) to Council, City of Lynchburg. Letter. 14 April 1964. PAM 3064, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.
- Mouer, Daniel L. “The Archaic to Woodland Transition in the

Piedmont and Coastal Plain Sections of the James River Valley, Virginia.” Doctoral dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh, 1990.

Nowlin, W.H., Junior Chamber of Commerce Chairman to George Reed. Letter. 28 February 1949. City Manager Records, Lynchburg, VA.

Reed, George, Superintendent of Park Forestry Dept., to R. F. Wagner, Director, Public Works, Lynchburg. Letter. 4 May 1935. PAM 3064, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA.

Reed, George to City Manager R.W.B. Hart. Letter. 28 April 1949, City Manager Records, Lynchburg, VA.

“The 14th Annual Black Liberation Day, May 24, 1986.” Program. Collection of Walter Fore, Lynchburg, VA.

## Interviews

- Brown, Sharon. Interview. Lynchburg, VA, 13 November 2007.
- Ferguson, Desiree. Interview at Riverside Park Memory Workshop, Lynchburg, VA, 8 November 2007.
- Fore, Walter, Kenneth Oglesby and Leroy Franklin. Interview. Lynchburg, VA, 4 January 2008.
- Forest, Tammy. Interview. Lynchburg, VA, 13 November 2007.
- Watts, Francoise. Interview at Riverside Park Memory Workshop, Lynchburg, Virginia, 8 November 2007.

## Online Resources

- History & Heritage of Civil Engineering. “Fink Deck Truss Bridge.” <<http://live.asce.org/hh/index.mxml?lid=67>> (accessed 3 September 2008).
- Soul Force. “Soul Force Announces Weekend ‘Out and About in Lynchburg.’” <<http://www.soulforce.org/article/302>> (accessed 3 September 2008).
- “The Stonewall Procession: From Rail to Water – Lynchburg's Tribute to a Fallen Hero.” <<http://www.lyncburghistoricalfoundation.org/stonewall/index.php>> (accessed 24 October 2007).

## Photographs

Historic photographs and Riverside Park plans:

Lynchburg Parks and Recreations

Lynchburg Museum

Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA

Nancy Blackwell Marion, The Design Group, Lynchburg, VA

Contemporary Photographs

John Milner Associates, Inc., Charlottesville, VA







## Riverside Park Master Plan

Lynchburg, Virginia

John Milner Associates, Inc.  
300 West Main Street Suite 201  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

*Laura Knott, Principal*  
*Jane Jacobs, Project Manager*  
*Jenny Mikulski, Project Landscape Designer*  
*Sarah Traum, Historian*