



UDC Report to the Planning Commission

UDC 2022-13	Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent Review	Meeting Date: 8/15/2022
Applicant/Petitioner	Nissa Dean, Deputy Director, Department of Parks and Recreation	
Project Description	Conceptual location, character, and extent review of the construction of a new community center and related landscape and site improvements	
Project Location		
Address: 2015 Ruffin Road		
Property Owner: CITY OF RICHMOND RECREATION & PARKS		
High-Level Details: <p>The applicant proposes a concept to construct a 30,000 square foot, 2 story community center, splashpark, walk trail, and sports fields.</p> <p>The proposed building will feature indoor basketball court, indoor pool, teaching kitchen, and multimedia library.</p> <p>Improvements to the site include public space improvements, a new parking lot, and enhanced landscaping and hardscaping.</p>		
UDC Recommendation		
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, Planner, raymond.roakes@rva.gov	
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	Significant public outreach has been completed to inform the proposed goals and features of the design, including surveys and neighborhood meetings.	
Conditions for Approval	The Urban Design Committee recommends: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant. 2. The Applicant include permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines. 	

	<p>3. The re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible.</p> <p>4. A maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to include landscaping, sustainability features, and public spaces.</p> <p>5. The applicant incorporate public art, where feasible.</p> <p>6. Site design should acknowledge the existing GRTC stop and include improvements, as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.</p>
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Findings of Fact

Site Description	<p>The site is located in the Davee Gardens neighborhood in Broad Rock at the intersection of Ruffin Road and Davee Road. The site is zoned R-4 – single-family residential district, and consists of roughly 8.50 acres. The property currently consists of a playground and basketball, tennis, and baseball fields. The project is bound to the south by largely residential uses and industrial uses to the north, east, and west. In the greater neighborhood, Interstate 95 is located to the east and the Phillip Morris complex to the south.</p>
Scope of Review	<p>The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter</p>
Project Description	<p>The purpose of the project is to develop a conceptual plan for the construction of a new community center and associated site and landscape improvements. The concept narrative states that the goal of the project is to create “engage, educate, and elevate the lives of the Southside community residents.”</p> <p>The project site currently consists of tennis, basketball, and baseball fields along with a small community building. Basketball, Soccer, playground, and splashpad are proposed. The existing small community building will be maintained. Community Gardens, a walk path, and parking lot is also included. The site will be buffered by landscaping from industrial uses to the north and west. Stormwater bioretention facilities will screen the parking area. GRTC Bus Line 88 is located on the primary street frontage along Ruffin Road, and a bus stop is located in front of the project site.</p> <p>The narrative states that the architecture of the community center is “engaging.” A large outdoor plaza marks the entry point and “playful” gables create a “front porch” for pedestrian use. Views of indoor sports increase interest at pedestrian level and help to attract users and inform of uses located inside the community center. Natural light is utilized throughout the building to encourage active use and pleasant atmosphere.</p> <p>The proposed community center will include net zero design goals and utilize solar panels and landscaping stormwater retention. The building will be designed to facilitate disaster response and emergency shelter during inclement weather.</p> <p>Site improvements to landscaping will use primarily local species and will maintain several well established trees along the street, protected through construction. Community gardens are proposed as a dedicated teach site for urban horticulture.</p> <p>Site improvements to hardscape will include a walk path (a request from the community) through the rear of the property which will include a small viewing tower to engage with views of the City skyline. A new play area is provided. Seating, picnic tables, trash receptacles, and bike parking will be provided throughout the site. A splash pad is proposed at the northern corner of the building to enhance the facilities for families with small children. Two basketball courts will be created and the existing baseball field will be replaced with a soccer field. Outdoor exercise equipment will also be included.</p>

Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	Text	Staff Analysis
Master Plan		
Big Moves: Realign City Facilities	<p><i>Vision: Equity, Sustainability, and Beauty</i></p> <p><i>Sustainability - City facilities can help showcase green building features.</i></p> <p><i>Beauty – Oftentimes, City facilities serve as beautiful landmarks that anchor a neighborhood and create a distinctive place through architecture and site design.</i></p> <p><i>Thriving Environment: City-owned buildings and land are opportunities for energy retrofits and green infrastructure to further Goals 15 and 16, as well as locations for new parks, urban agriculture, and resiliency hubs to further Goal 17.</i></p>	<p>Big Moves: Realign City Facilities</p> <p>The project includes the stated goal of designing a new public facility with equity and beauty in mind. The programming of the new community facility will include educationally minded assets such as a multimedia library and community garden.</p> <p>A number of sustainability and environmentally friendly features are included. The building will be design with a net zero goal, sustainable energy will be introduced, and environmental resiliency is a goal of the plans for landscaping.</p>
	<p>Objective 2.1 - Align new facilities and improve existing City owned facilities.</p> <p><i>f. Implement programs to improve the energy efficiency of City-owned buildings</i></p> <p>Objective 4.2 – Integrate public art into the built environment.</p> <p><i>c. Link public art with major public facility initiatives (e.g., plazas, buildings, parks, bridges) and expand the definition of public art to include architectural embellishments of buildings, or landscape features.</i></p> <p>Objective 10.4 - Increase the number of low-emission vehicles.</p> <p><i>b. Seek opportunities to install electric charging stations on publicly owned land, balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.</i></p> <p>Objective 15.4 - Reduce the amount of waste going to landfills.</p> <p><i>f. Demonstrate sustainable consumption, sustainable building practices, and zero-waste behaviors in the design and expansion of City operations.</i></p> <p>Objective 16.3 - Reduce water consumption by 10% per capita.</p> <p><i>b. Encourage on-site graywater uses in public and private facilities.</i></p> <p>Objective 16.4 - Increase green stormwater infrastructure</p>	<p>Master Plan Objectives</p> <p>Richmond 300 includes a number of sustainability objectives specifically relating to public facilities and City owned properties. Renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable stormwater management, and sustainable construction should be considered. Sustainability features that are planned to be included: NetZero energy (combine energy efficiency and renewable energy generation to consume only as much energy as can be produced onsite), photovoltaic roof panels, and green site improvements. Zero emission charging stations could be considered for this site.</p> <p>Richmond 300 establishes that City facilities should be considered in larger resiliency efforts. Community Centers are traditionally considered in municipal resiliency plans as they operate as community centers and conveniently placed municipally owned spaces. The project includes plans related to disaster sustainability.</p> <p>Landscaping and lighting details will be established at a later stage, but should include sustainability considerations.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant consider permeable surfaces in the proposed parking areas and pedestrian paths.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends the applicant incorporate public art, where feasible.</u></p>

	<p><i>b. Identify opportunities for green infrastructure on public lands and rights-of-way</i></p> <p>Objective 17.3 <i>Reduce urban heat</i></p> <p><i>a. Encourage lighter-colored surfaces for roads and roofs to reflect sunlight.</i></p> <p><i>b. Identify opportunities for green roofs on public facilities</i></p> <p>Objective 17.6 <i>Increase the resiliency of infrastructure and community assets.</i></p> <p><i>h. Increase local renewable energy generation (see Goal 16).</i></p> <p><i>h. Identify community facilities to serve as resilience hubs and update systems to be more resilient.</i></p> <p>Objective 17.7 <i>Increase and enhance biodiversity</i></p> <p><i>b. Increase the prevalence of native plant species and plants for healthy pollinator communities at public facilities</i></p> <p><i>c. Implement the RVA Clean Water strategy to use 80% native plants in new landscaping at public facilities by 2023.</i></p> <p><i>g. Encourage bird houses, bat houses, and other structures that provide important and safe shelters for wildlife.</i></p> <p>Objective 17.8 <i>Reduce light pollution.</i></p> <p><i>b. Install hooded light fixtures on public rights-of-way and buildings to reduce light pollution and reduce effect on nocturnal species.</i></p>	
<p>Urban Design Guidelines</p>		
<p>PAVING AND SURFACE MATERIALS – Page 3</p>	<p><i>The design guidelines suggest compatibility, performance, durability, maintenance requirements, cost, and sustainability be considered when designing pavement areas. Impervious areas should be limited and pervious pavement materials should be introduced, especially in minimally used parking areas.</i></p> <p><i>The design guidelines also require GRTC transit stops to be considered during design and construction and</i></p>	<p>PAVING AND SURFACE MATERIALS</p> <p>Hardscape materials will be finalized at a later stage; sustainability and compatibility considerations should be included. Significant improvements to the site landscape include stormwater and sustainability considerations.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to</u></p>

	<i>maintained as comfortable, safe, and of quality design.</i>	<p><u>include landscaping, sustainability features, and public spaces.</u></p> <p>GRTC Transit Stops</p> <p>A GRTC bus stop is located along Ruffin Road. As a centralized and welcoming community space, the project should acknowledge this stop and consider improvements.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that site design acknowledge the existing GRTC stop and include improvements, as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.</u></p>
STREET DESIGN – P.6	<i>Intersections should be designed to serve pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists in a safe manner.</i>	<p>Street Design</p> <p>No pedestrian safety features are considered for the primary street frontage, Ruffin Road.</p>
LANDSCAPING – Page 10	<i>Plantings should be compatible with and relate to surrounding landscapes. Site landscaping should complement and soften new construction and building architecture. Plant materials should create spaces by providing walls and canopies in outdoor areas. In addition, landscaping should provide a sense of scale and seasonal interest. Species diversity, plant selection, and long term maintenance should be considered.</i>	<p>LANDSCAPING</p> <p>A significant portion of the site will be green space. Several well established trees along the ROW will be maintained and protected throughout construction. Landscaping is used to create interest and natural connections for pedestrians throughout the site.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to include landscaping, sustainability features, and public spaces.</u></p>
STORM WATER MANAGEMENT AND LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT – Page 11	<i>Design guidelines encourage use of Low Impact Development design elements that that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, minimize, and detain stormwater runoff are applied to not only open space, but also rooftops, streetscapes, parking lots, and sidewalks.</i>	<p>STORM WATER MANAGEMENT AND LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Information on stormwater strategies is not provided within the application. Stormwater specifics will be finalized at a later stage, but should include low-impact design combined with landscaping to compliment an attractive and accessible outdoor space and public realm. Rainwater recycling is proposed with the project which will help to reduce runoff from stormwater. The applicant should consider opportunities for permeable paving in the proposed parking areas and pedestrian paths for the final plan design.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that sustainable stormwater features be included, as detailed by the Urban Design Guidelines.</u></p>
GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES – Page 13	<i>Guidelines suggest that buildings should be oriented toward the primary street that borders the site and architecturally acknowledge all adjacent public right-of-ways. A building's entrance should be easily recognizable, at ground level, and appropriately design to accommodate persons of differing mobility levels.</i>	<p>GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES</p> <p>The building is located in the center of the site and the entrance faces Ruffin Road. The proposed siting allows the maximum visibility from the street throughout the property encouraging active use and safety.</p>

	<i>Efficiency should be considered when deciding building location and orientation such as passive solar heating design and maximization of natural light.</i>	
BUILDING SETBACK – Page 14	<i>The guidelines state that new buildings should have the same or similar setback as existing buildings on the same street. There will be situations, however, where a different setback would be appropriate for the type of building and the desired environment. Examples would include larger public buildings, such as schools and recreation centers, located within urban residential areas. In certain cases, a new building should be constructed with a minimal setback to reinforce the traditional street wall.</i>	The proposed addition will largely meet the established minimum setback trends along Ruffin Road. The proposed gardens, basketball court, and “Front Porch” shade structure create an inviting and engaging streetscape.
SITE FEATURES – Page 14	<i>The site should respond to its users through its design and by providing an appropriate array of amenities to serve those users and should incorporate sustainable design aspects. Plazas are encouraged and should provide pleasant transition from street to building while being designed in inviting and accommodating ways for a diversity of users. Operational features and parking should be screened from view.</i>	The primary façade and surrounding site circulation is oriented to pedestrian users in both massing and design. The number of outdoor spaces and plazas add interest and usable space for pedestrians. This diversity of uses will enhance pedestrian activity throughout the site. These spaces include a splash pad as an amenity for families, playground, and outdoor sports courts. Deliveries are not detailed in this application, but will likely be facilitated from the parking area.
BUILDING PROPORTION – Page 15	<i>Building massing should be compatible with the surrounding uses; although, important public buildings may require larger sizes. Visual impact can be minimized via design techniques such as setbacks or varying surface and roof planes. Height and roof design should be sensitive to surrounding uses, but may be taller on corners to frame access to the block.</i>	The project includes a variable gable “front porch” breezeway that is the primary street facing façade. This variable gable approach mimics the roof style of the surrounding neighborhood, adds visual interest, and breaks up the façade into smaller scale rhythms.
FAÇADE DESIGN. – Page 18	<i>Building materials should be compatible with surrounding uses and not cause visual confusion by using numerous different materials on a single façade. Material quality and design should complement those on the existing building and be sufficiently durable and sustainable.</i> <i>Building design should take cues from the surrounding area. An easily recognizable, inviting and accessible entrance should be included and ground level design should be comfortable for the pedestrian. Large expanses of blank or undifferentiated wall are not appropriate building elevations, especially at the street level. Access for users of differing mobilities should be included; handicap ramps or other handicap considerations</i>	Materials are planned to be locally sourced and recycled where possible. Final material selection will be finalized at a later stage of design. <u>Staff recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible.</u> The proposed façade of the addition introduces a modern, bright, and inviting glass, wood, and stone materials. The façade uses a number architectural features and changes in rhythm and setback to break up the design to more adequately fit the surrounding single family detached neighborhood feel.

	<i>should be incorporated into the façade design and to a high design quality.</i>	
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