



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: October 16, 2017
RE: **Final Section 17.05 Review of additions to the set of City-standard streetlights;
UDC No. 2017-26(2)**

I. APPLICANT

Mark A. Olinger, Department of Planning and Development Review

II. LOCATION

Citywide within right-of-way and on the grounds of public facilities

Property Owner:

City of Richmond

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final approval of additions to the set of city-standard streetlights to be installed on public properties and facilities throughout the City.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The proposed streetlights will serve multiple purposes: to increase safety and vibrancy at night while simultaneously establishing neighborhood identity. Street lighting and security are a constant concern of residents and businesses. Consisting of a unique luminaire affixed to a bracket and cable system, the nature of the streetlights pay homage to historic streetlights from the period of significance (1880-1949) yet are modern in design. Regarding placement, they are highly adaptable as they may be installed in a number of different locations and on various urban forms (e.g. wooden poles, steel poles, buildings, wide or narrow streets, etc.). The primary area for installation is Hull Street and Industrial Manchester, followed by expansion areas on either side. In the future, these streetlights may also be installed in other similar industrial neighborhoods in the city such as Scott's Addition.

Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the final design with the following conditions:

- That PDR work with DPU for removal of existing fixtures
- That testing of the proposed new fixture be done on site
- That an investigation be done to determine the feasibility of implementing smart controls on the entire system

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The applicant is requesting approval of these streetlights as City standards to be applied throughout Industrial Manchester and other places in the City where local conditions allow.

Initial installation is proposed to take place on Hull Street and other subsequent areas of Industrial Manchester from W. Commerce Road to the river and from Maury St. to the river.

b. Scope of Review

The proposed streetlights are subject to design review under Section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter as “public appurtenances”.

c. UDC Review History

The UDC reviewed this project at the September 7, 2017 meeting. The committee stated they would like to see samples, materials, or a mockup of the lighting in a similar context to what is proposed. Additionally, the committee was concerned about whether or not to abstain from making a decision until it was confirmed that LED conversion was possible in order to make installation more efficient. A motion was made to defer this application for resubmission (on the basis of design) with the following comments and requests for resubmission:

- That the applicant return with general material samples, including the proposed drop lens, and elements of the proposed pedestrian mounted fixture that will help the UDC further study the scale and size of the design as it relates to the pedestrian
- That the applicant provide samples/examples of photos of this material in a comparable, urban/industrial streetscape

The UDC has reviewed applications for VCU streetlight encroachments.

Recommendations from the UDC 2014-22 application suggests that:

The “Urban Design Guidelines are supportive of the use of the use of pedestrian-scaled light fixtures, and the proposed streetlights are located where there is a high volume of pedestrian traffic. However, Staff finds the proposal for the ‘Battery Park’ fixture to be inconsistent with the recommendation that “lighting fixtures should be consistent with those existing in the surrounding area.” Staff finds that the use of different light fixtures on opposite faces of the same block will present a disjointed streetscape.

d. Project Description

This application proposes the design and installation of new roadway and pedestrian light fixtures that reflect the industrial character of certain Richmond neighborhoods. The first priority would be Industrial Manchester, with the first installation along Hull St.

Street lighting and security have been a concern of residents and businesses for many years. Some streets are well lit, e.g., Hull St., but others appear to be very dark, especially narrow east-west streets (4th St., 6th St., and 7th St.). Safe sidewalk lighting is an issue throughout the neighborhood.

Following a number of meetings on this topic, the applicant began the process of looking at what kinds of lighting might have been prevalent during the latter part of the 19th Century – mid -20th Century as a “jumping off point” for any new lighting that might be installed.

The applicant found examples of lighting from the period of significance for Industrial Manchester as evident in slides #4 and #5. Based on this evidence, it is believed that the new lights should be considered an update of the historical lights allowing the area to maintain the overall “feel” of the time, while meeting modern performance requirements.

The applicant discovered an old steel pole on the east side of Belvidere, between Cary and Cumberland Streets. It is believed to be one of the last vestiges of street lighting from the era (please see slide #6 and #7).

The applicant seeks to use a streetlight design that is:

- generally consistent with the historic fabric;
- modern enough to fit into the emerging design aesthetic for the neighborhood;
- flexible enough to be installed in a number of different locations and types (e.g., wooden poles, steel poles, on buildings, wide streets, narrow streets); and
- potentially installed in other parts of Manchester, or similarly situated areas elsewhere in the city, e.g. Scott’s Addition

In terms of location, the primary installation will be within the Industrial Manchester area with potential longer-term expansions into other parts of the Manchester area as development and budgets permit.

The fixture, a bracket and cable unit, and attachment to poles is consistent with the history and character of the area.

The proposed luminaire is a product from Spring City Lechmere in the Matte Platinum finish. The Department of Public Utilities (DPU) will soon launch a series of test locations for LED lighting however the Manchester street lighting area is not included in the test locations. Until LED is a city-wide standard, the Lechmere can support metal halide or HPS based on the demands of DPU.

Although not included in the application, it is possible to wall-mount the light assembly. Both the arm and cable length can be adjusted to accommodate differing street and sidewalk widths.

The applicant has shared this proposal with the Manchester area developers, the Manchester Alliance, DPU, and Councilwoman Roberston. The reaction from the neighborhood and Councilwoman have been very supportive. DPU has agreed to include the fixture in their inventory. The project will include 10% “attic stock” for DPU.

Once final approval is received, the City will move immediately to bidding for the acquisition of the fixtures. Installation should occur in mid-2018.

e. Master Plan

The Old Manchester Neighborhood Plan, adopted in 1996 by both the Planning Commission and City Council in 1996, provides a vision statement regarding street lighting in the Old Manchester (located in the expansion area of this application), “ Specially designed streetlights and brick sidewalks create an historic atmosphere in the area” (Page 14).

Regarding Community Character and Design as it pertains to Urban Character, the plan further recommends to “Install pedestrian-level streetlights. Cobra-head fixtures provide unpleasant and unnecessary levels of illumination in many parts of the neighborhood. In addition, trees growing under cobra-head fixtures often cast shadows that severely reduce their effectiveness. Although necessary in some areas, such lighting should be supplemented with historically-influenced, pedestrian-scaled lighting throughout the neighborhood. New street signs and interpretive signage should reflect the flavor of the light poles and fixtures” (page 34).

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines specify that “pedestrian light fixtures be between ten and fifteen feet above the ground and that they be spaced forty to sixty feet apart”. The guidelines also note that “safe and comfortable circulation depends more upon the consistency of illumination than on the level or brightness of the lighting” (page 22). Further, the Guidelines state that “Lighting fixtures should be consistent with those existing in the surrounding area,” and also that “New light fixtures may be affixed to existing metal or concrete utility poles, for cost effectiveness and to reduce clutter on the sidewalk” (page 23).

VI. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**