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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: August 15, 2016  
RE: **Final Location, Character and Extent review of Historic Fulton Memorial Park; UDC No. 2016-35**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Heywood Harrison, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities  
Malachi Mills, RK&K

**II. LOCATION**

611 Goddin Street and adjacent rights-of-way

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond General Services

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for final location, character, and extent review of a park in the area. This is envisioned as an extension of the immediately-adjacent Powhatan Park.

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

This proposal would establish a passive park on the property at 611 Goddin Street as well as adjacent portions of Old Williamsburg Avenue and Fulton Street rights-of-way. The park will provide space for citizen gathering and events while presenting the history of the neighborhood and memorializing significant people and events in Fulton. The project is the result of a number of community meetings held throughout the last five years that were coordinated by the Greater Fulton Legacy Committee, Storefront for Community Design, Neighborhood Resource Center and the City's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

The final design proposal is refinement of the very detailed conceptual design approved three years ago; the Committee had a detailed discussion with the applicant about clarifications of the design, including proposed phasing, grading of the amphitheater, and the use of salvaged granite and other materials. The applicant clarified that they intend to use the City Standard Charleston fixture for lighting.

The Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve this item with the following consideration

- That as phasing is developed and additional details are developed that they will be submitted to staff for approval and that if those plans exceed the capacity for staff review that they be brought back to the Urban Design Committee for review, specifically regarding:
- Stabilizer for the path
- Structural engineering details specifically regarding the amphitheater
- Lighting specifications
- That there be power in areas for envisioned for events and public gathering

**Staff Contacts:**

Kathleen Onufer (804) 646-5207

**V. FINDINGS OF FACT****a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

This proposal would establish a park on the property at 611 Goddin Street as well as adjacent portions of Old Williamsburg Avenue and Fulton Street rights-of-way. The subject property and adjacent rights-of-way are located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Williamsburg Avenue and Goddin Street and are located in the B-2 (Community Business) zoning district. The property at 611 Goddin Street was transferred to the City of Richmond from the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) by Ordinance #2013-78-68, adopted April 22, 2013. The subject portions of the Old Williamsburg Avenue and Fulton Street rights-of-way will be vacated as a part of the overall project.

The steeply sloped area to the east of the subject land is part of Powhatan Park, the properties across Goddin Street to the north are being developed with single-family residential properties as set forth by the Fulton Community Unit Plan, and the land across Williamsburg Avenue to the west and south is located partly in the City and partly in Henrico County and is home to the SB Cox demolition/salvage company.

The Fulton neighborhood that emerged in the 1850s was by the late 1800s populated by former slaves and their families. Fulton was built on the street grid and was the eastern stop on the City's trolley line, becoming home to a number of supermarkets, furniture stores and other commercial establishments. The community began to decline when the trolley stopped running and people began to rely on their own automobiles. By the mid-1960s City Council had commissioned RRHA to complete a study to see what could be done about the deteriorating situation in Fulton. The study proposed demolition, and the last structure remaining in the former bustling neighborhood fell in the early 1980s.

**b. Scope of Review**

The proposed project is subject to general location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as identification for a "park".

**c. UDC Review History**

In May 2013, the UDC reviewed and Planning Commission approved a conceptual design for the park in this location with the following conditions:

- That Old Williamsburg Avenue and Fulton Street be formally vacated by ordinance of City Council prior to final submittal.
- That the existing overhead utility lines along the sections of Old Williamsburg Avenue and Fulton Street that are to be vacated be buried or re-routed.
- That the final plans show details on amenities including but not limited to the proposed game tables, benches, trash receptacles, tree uprights, and any proposed park identification signage.
- That the final plans show details on the proposed hardscaping materials.
- That the final plans provide a landscaping schedule, including plant species, quantities, and size at the time of installation.

**d. Project Description**

This proposal would establish a passive park on the property at 611 Goddin Street as well as adjacent portions of Old Williamsburg Avenue and Fulton Street rights-of-way. The park will provide space for citizen gathering and events while presenting the history of the neighborhood and memorializing significant people and events in Fulton. The project is the result of a number of community meetings held over 2011-2013 that were coordinated by the Greater Fulton Legacy Committee, Storefront for Community Design, Neighborhood Resource Center and the City's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

The establishment of the park will require the vacation of existing Old Williamsburg Avenue and Fulton Street rights-of-way south of Goddin Street. These rights-of-way currently terminate in a guard rail that was erected when Williamsburg Avenue was realigned. The existing roadway will be dug up, the granite curbs and any cobblestones under the pavement will be salvaged, and the drop inlets will be removed. In their place, the road beds will be filled to level it with the adjacent land, and a 13' wide soft-surface gravel walking path will be established following the alignment of the former roads. This path is now 1' wider than as proposed in the conceptual plans.

The walking paths will begin at Goddin Street as cobblestone entry aprons with removable bollards that will allow maintenance vehicles to enter but will restrict access to City vehicles. Approximately halfway up each 13' wide gravel path, there will be a cobble paver mini-plaza, with metal benches and a granite timeline pylon. The addition of these two mini-plazas is one of the major changes since the conceptual designs. The path along the old Fulton Street right-of-way is approximately 350 feet long, and the path aligned along the Old Williamsburg right-of-way will be over 600 feet long. The applicant will be presenting more information about the slope of the paths. Two benches and one trashcan each are placed along each walking path, utilizing City streetscape standards. Each path is proposed to have street light fixtures alongside it. The cut sheet does not provide an image.

The paths will join at a circular plaza of granite pavers at the southernmost point of the parcel along Williamsburg Avenue and will provide a connection to the existing concrete sidewalk running alongside the street. This plaza will contain eight granite pylons with plaques dedicated to important figures in the Fulton community, as well as a sculpture platform and two granite benches. The pylons and sculpture platform are up-lit.

Beginning at the Goddin Street plaza at the southern tip of the park and moving northward along Williamsburg Avenue, there will be a stacked granite block wall near the perimeter of the park. As one moves northward, the block wall begins to move apart, signifying the decline and demolition of the Fulton neighborhood. Where it approaches the corner of Williamsburg Avenue and Goddin Street, the wall begins to come together again, signifying the rebirth of the neighborhood. There is a park sign location designated for the southernmost plaza along Williamsburg Avenue, fronting the street and outside of the seating area.

The existing concrete sidewalk along Goddin Street, which is in poor condition, will be removed and replaced with a hardscaped plaza extending 35' from the Goddin

Street curb. The plaza will contain a band of cobblestones along the curb line, transitioning to pavers for the remainder of the depth. An allee of up-lit trees will run through this plaza parallel to Goddin Street and will provide shelter to two proposed game tables. Twelve 5x5 tree pits are indicated, and are proposed to be planted with trees of unspecified species with Liriope groundcover. The central area of the Goddin plaza will contain pavers installed at a 90 degree angle to Goddin St as well as a statue and other informational structures such as a map relating the history of the Fulton area. This section of Goddin Street, up until the intersection with the Fulton Street right-of-way, is relatively flat, as the contour map included in the grading & drainage plans show. There are no sidewalks extending on Goddin Street beyond the project site.

This central area of the plaza along Goddin Street will open out to a sunken amphitheater. The floor of the amphitheater stage will match the pavers used on the side areas of the plaza. Granite pylons will act as the backdrop for the stage. The amphitheater tiers will be sodded and will be separated by recycled granite curbing, with additional stairs on axis with the stage. The top tier of the amphitheater will connect to an 8' soft-surface path that connects to the portions of the path in the vacated rights-of-way with a 6' band on the perimeter. Seating at this level will be provided on granite benches.

The park grounds to the south of the amphitheater will remain an open, sloped lawn of approximately 7500 square feet, with the exception of the single, existing elm tree which will be retained in the plans.

The perimeter pathways in the vacated rights-of-way will be landscaped with allees of large deciduous trees. Species are proposed as Trident Maple, Red Maple, and Lacebark Elm, with caliper 3.5" at time of planning. The areas under the trees on the exterior of the park will be landscaped with a variety of Pink Dogwood, Sweet Bay Magnolia, and a variety of shrubs, perennials, and grasses. A small rain garden will be provided at the northeastern tip of the site. In all, the plans will result in a net decrease in the amount of impervious area within the project boundaries.

6" granite curbing is proposed throughout the project to delineate path, plaza, and other element boundaries.

Funds for the establishment of the park will come from the City and private donations. The park's development may occur in phases as additional funds become available.

**e. Master Plan**

The subject property and adjacent rights-of-way are located in the East planning district as defined by the citywide Master Plan. The Plan recommends Public and Open Space uses for this property, a designation that includes publicly owned and operated parks, recreation areas and open spaces (page 135).

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Public Park section of the Urban Design Guidelines notes that "public parks are integral to the quality of life found in any urban landscape. Parks should respond to the environment in which they are located and should be designed in accordance with their intended use" (page 9).

The Guidelines go on to share that “passive natural parks should have adequate trails and access to accommodate intended users” and that “successful public parks...share certain qualities, which include the ability to attract and entertain visitors, access and connectivity to surrounding areas, and safety and comfort” (page 9). Lastly, this section states that “lighting and landscaping should allow for surveillance and policing activities, but should be designed primarily to accommodate the intended use of the park” (page 9).

The Landscaping section of the Guidelines notes that “plant materials should create spaces by providing walls and canopies in outdoor areas” and that “landscaping should provide a sense of scale and seasonal interest”. In addition, “landscape plans should include diverse plant species, including evergreen, flowering and shade tree species combined with shrubs, ground covers and annual and perennial plantings” (page 10).

## **VII. ATTACHMENTS**

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