

Staff Report City of Richmond, Virginia





UDC 2024-30	Final Location, Character, and Extent Review Meeting Date: 6/6/2024		
Applicant/Petitioner	Scott Firestine, Director, Richmond Public Libraries		
Project Description	UDC 2024-20 FINAL Location, Character, and Extent review of the Greening Richmond Public Libraries: Ginter Park Branch project, located at 1200 Westbrook Avenue.		
Project Location			
Address: 1200 Westbrook Avenue	4824 m 4823	4822 4820 4819	
Property Owner: CITY OF RICHMOND PUBLIC WORKS	4820	4818 4816 4814 ≤ 4815	
High-Level Details:	4815 Rd	4812 Ge 4813	
The applicant proposes sustainable stormwater and pedestrian infrastructure improvements to the exterior of the existing library and surrounding right-of-way. Improvements to the site include public space improvements, art, a new parking lot, enhanced landscaping and hardscaping, and green stormwater facilities.	3 4813 4813 4814 4813 4813 4810 4809 4809 4800 1300 1200 1200 1200 Westbrook Ave Westbrook Ave 4803 4803 1301 1200 1200 1200 1200 Westbrook Ave Westbrook Ave 4539 4537 1305 1215 1211 1205 1201 4708 4539 4704 4704 4533 4535 4533 4533		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions		
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, Planner, raymond.roakes@rva.gov		
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	The CONCEPT was approved on May 21, 2024 by the Planning Commission.		
Recommended	CURRENTLY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS		
Conditions	NA		
	PREVIOUSLY APPROVED CONDITION ON THE CONCEPT PLA	<u>N</u>	
	1. Applicant to work with GRTC to determine if the adjacent bus sto or improved for the FINAL Application.	op should be relocated	

Findings of Fact

Site Description	The site is located in the Ginter Park neighborhood. The property is situated on the corner of Westbrook Avenue and Brook Road. The property currently consists of the Ginter Park Branch Library and associated landscaping and parking lot

Scope of Review	The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter and review and recommendation under 17.05.		
Project	The Applicant States:		
Description	"The purpose of the project is to develop a series of bioretention basins and areas of pervious pavers designed to Virginia Department of Environmental Quality standards to infiltrate storm water discharge from a portion of the roof, sidewalks, and parking lots; reduce the heat island effect of the parking as possible; create an accessible route from public sidewalks into the building; and create a small public park that features shaded reading areas, play space for children, an interpretive edible plant space, and opportunities for education about the importance of native plants and managing stormwater runoff. Some impervious area and most non-native species will be removed with native plants added for shade, wildlife habitat, and other ecosystems services. The project strives to be become a model of sustainable site development with educational components accomplished with an interpretive sign, special library programs, and community involvement and support."		
	Staff Review:		
	The purpose of the project is to develop a FINAL plan for the construction of sustainable stormwater and pedestrian infrastructure improvements to the exterior of the existing library and surrounding right-of-way.		
	The proposed FINAL plans are almost exactly the same as the CONCEPT approval last month.		
	In the CONCEPT review, Staff expressed, and UDC/CPC agreed, that further attention to the existing bus stop was needed in the FINAL plan set. The Applicant has addressed those concerns with GRTC and provided the necessary changes in the site plan.		
	New gathering spaces are also provided with the project, including an arbor seating area and Childrens Garden. A small burm is proposed to create a sense of buffer from the street, while not being high enough to block views for the purposes of safety.		
	Staff strongly supports the enhancement of this space in terms of stormwater and landscaping, as well as the transformation of the space into a more usable location rather than a front lawn type of design.		
	Staff Recommendation:		
	Staff recommends approval.		

Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	Text	Staff Analysis	
Master Plan			
Big Moves: Realign City Facilities	Vision: Equity, Sustainability, and Beauty	Big Moves: Realign City Facilities	
	Sustainability - City facilities can help showcase green building features.	The project includes a number of sustainability green features that will be showcased for the	
	Beauty – Oftentimes, City facilities serve as beautiful landmarks that anchor a neighborhood and create a distinctive place through architecture and site design.	community. The library will also facilitate learning opportunities to enhance knowledge of sustainability in the community.	
		The addition of greater landscaping and site features will contribute to the beauty of the site and the ability of the library to anchor the neighborhood through distinctive place making.	
	<i>Objective 4.2</i> – Integrate pubic art into the built environment. c. Link public art with major public facility initiatives (e.g., plazas,	Master Plan Objectives Richmond 300 includes a number of sustainability objectives specifically relating to public facilities and City owned properties.	

	buildings, parks, bridges) and expand the definition of public art to include architectural embellishments of buildings, or landscape features.	Sustainable stormwater management is a primary concern and will be enhanced by this project. ROW stormwater will also be treated by this project, furthering RVA 300 Goals.
	Objective 10.4 - Increase the number of low-emission vehicles.	Further landscaping in parking areas and the street sidewalk will reduce heat island effects.
	Objective 16.4 - Increase green stormwater infrastructure	Native, adaptive, and pollinator plantings will be utilized.
	b. Identify opportunities for green infrastructure on public lands and rights-of-way	Art is proposed.
	Objective 17.3 Reduce urban heat	
	Objective 17.7 Increase and enhance biodiversity	
	b. Increase the prevalence of native plant species and plants for healthy pollinator communities at public facilities	
	c. Implement the RVA Clean Water strategy to use 80% native plants in new landscaping at public facilities by 2023.	
	g. Encourage bird houses, bat houses, and other structures that provide important and safe shelters for wildlife.	
Urban Design Guidelines		
PAVING AND SURFACE MATERIALS – Page 3	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.	PAVING AND SURFACE MATERIALS The project will install pervious pavers in the in certain locations. The project will also install bio- retention facilities that will treat stormwater from both onsite and the ROW.
LANDSCAPING – Page 10	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.	LANDSCAPING Landscaping is used to create interest and enhance the beauty of the existing site. Diverse species and long term maintenance is considered.
STORM WATER MANAGEMENT AND LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT – Page 11	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.	STORM WATER MANAGEMENT AND LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT Low impact stormwater practices are included with bio-retention facilities and permeable pavers.