



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: May 21, 2018
RE: **Final Location, Character, and Extent review of Riverview Community Park – playground, benches, and park sign, 1907 Texas Ave.; UDC 2018-18**

I. APPLICANT

Marlie Creasey-Smith, Department of Parks, Recreation, & Community Facilities

II. LOCATION

1907 Texas Ave.

Property Owner:

CITY OF RICHMOND RECREATION & PARKS

III. PURPOSE

The application is for the final location, character, and extent review of the development of a new park and amenities in the Riverview Community.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This final plan consists of developing a playground, installing benches and a park sign as part of a larger development for Riverview Community Park. Due to the multitude of organizations and resources assisting with the development of the park, the applicant is breaking up the development process into multiple phases for enhanced efficiency.

This plan proposes to install playground equipment onsite using subgrade concrete footers. The area will remain ungraded with mulch placed on top of the grass. The benches and sign will be comparable to those found in other city parks. Fully developed, the park will include a playground, skate park, community garden, picnic area, walking trail, and low-impact parking area. This project aligns with the Urban Design Guideline's notion 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."

The improvements proposed in this application have widespread community support with active participation in the design and development provided by: The Friends of Riverview Community Park (FoRCP), Maymont Civic League, and Richmond Young Professionals Kiwanis (RYPKC). Staff is supportive of this plan for the installation of a playground, benches, and a new sign.

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

- That benches be installed under existing and proposed trees, for the utilization of shade, whenever possible

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The proposed project is located on the northern part of a property with the address of 1907 Texas Avenue. The proposed site is situated to the east of the 1800 block of Texas Avenue, between Treasure Island Trail on the west and Mount Calvary Cemetery on the east.

Located in an R-5 district, the site is surrounded by single-family detached homes to the north and south with the cemetery to the east. The property the site is located on connects to the Texas Beach parking lot.

There currently exists an abandoned basketball court that, over the years, has been converted into a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) skate park.

b. Scope of Review

The project is subject to location, character, and extent review as part of a “public park” under Section 17.07 of the City Charter.

c. UDC Review History

A full plan for the park was presented to the Urban Design Committee in September 2017. The Urban Design Committee recommended that the Planning Commission approve the plan with the following conditions for final review:

- Where appropriate, plant shade trees to further enhance passive and active recreation

Additionally, the Urban Design Committee recommended the Planning Commission approve the conceptual design with the following considerations for final review:

- That any lighting be 3000K LED and provide a lighting plan
- Electric hookups in the picnic area be provided
- Water hookups, including a water fountain be provided
- Trash and recycling receptacles be provided
- Provide samples of playground furnishings and accompanying seating for the playground area

d. Project Description

This application for the playground, benches, and park sign is part of a larger proposal for a community park. Riverview Community Park, when fully implemented, will be an all-ages community park that will consist of a playground, skate park, community garden, picnic area, walking trail, and an additional parking area.

This proposal has widespread community support with active participation in the design and the development of the park being provided by the following groups:

The Friends of Riverview Community Park (FoRCP) - A non-profit organization under the Enrichmond 501c3 umbrella made up of volunteers from the Maymont (Riverview) community, FoRCP was founded to support the creation and ongoing maintenance of the entire Riverview Community Park site.

Maymont Civic League – The Maymont Civic League is the neighborhood association for the Maymont (Riverview) neighborhood. Members of this group have been advocating for changes to the site of the planned Riverview Community Park for many years, and when plans for a park at this site started emerging from the community, the Maymont Civic League members were immediately ardent supporters of the park project. The Civic League submitted a letter of approval of the project in January 2015, and a letter requesting the name be officially be designated as Riverview Community Park in June 2016. (Both of these letters are included as attachments to this application.)

Richmond Young Professionals Kiwanis (RYPKC) – A young professionals organization in Richmond, VA with a focus on making a positive impact in the community, RYPKC is hoping to support this project with financial and in-kind support. RYPKC also plans to support the neighborhood in volunteering for clean ups and long term support of the park.

Due to a multitude of organizations and resources assisting with the development of the park, the applicant is breaking up the development process into multiple parts for enhanced efficiency.

Playground – After requesting bids from three playground manufacturers (Kompan, Miracle, and Landscape Structures), FoRCP in partnership with RYPKC and Parks and Recreation selected the Kompan bid as being the best value and the best fit for the location. Kompan’s quote (see attached documents for further details) meets the quality and cost specifications requested and includes some playground elements that will be an enticing addition to the types of play structures available to children in the City of Richmond. As the funding will need to be approved and Kompan needs to have a four-month lead time to construct orders, we’re hoping to begin construction one year after hearing back from the Urban Design Committee and Planning Commission.

The playground installation will be installed without site grading. The land disturbance will be well under 2500 square feet and will occur at the locations of the footers for the play equipment. The ground under the playground equipment will remain pervious. There will be 2 8' benches installed (see attached diagram). They will be installed by Parks and Rec on concrete footers under the legs (6 per bench).

The timeline means we would be installing playground equipment in July 2019. This is dependent on when final City of Richmond approval is granted.

Parking Area – To limit parking in the alley or on the grass, there will be a parking area installed using recycled crushed concrete. The parking area will hold approximately twelve vehicles.

The total budget for the playground, benches, and park sign: \$88,426.00.

e. Master Plan

The subject property and adjacent rights-of-way are located in the Near West planning district as defined by the citywide Master Plan. The Plan suggests development and land use must be respectful of both the natural and manmade environment (page 227).

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Environment section of the Urban Design Guidelines state that “Active parks should have adequate facilities (i.e. sports fields, trash receptacles, benches, running paths, etc.) to accommodate intended users.” The General Characteristics section maintains that “successful public parks, both small and large, active or passive, share certain qualities, which include the ability to attract and entertain visitors, access and connectivity to surrounding areas, and safety and comfort.” Furthermore the Design Considerations section suggests that “impacts to the natural landscape should be assessed and should generally be minimized when constructing man-made elements. A preference should be given toward materials and construction techniques which improve energy efficiency and water/soil quality. 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 Guidelines express support for low-impact development, the goal of which is to “mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source” (page 11).

The Public Facilities section of the Urban Design Guidelines contains relevant suggestions on site programming such as “connectivity from the site to adjacent areas should be considered” (page 14).

VI. ATTACHMENTS

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