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To: Urban Design Committee  
From: Planning and Preservation Division  
Date: March 5, 2015  
RE: **Conceptual Location, Character and Extent Review of the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at 3502 N. Hopkins Road; UDC No. 2015-09**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Dexter Goode, Dept. of Public Works

**II. LOCATION**

3502 N. Hopkins Road

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for conceptual Location, Character and Extent review of the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at 3502 N. Hopkins Road for the relocation of Department of Public Works Traffic Signal/Sign shop and Radio shop operations to the site.

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

This project involves the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at a City-owned complex at 3502 N. Hopkins Road. This is a part of the ongoing efforts to relocate City operations currently located at the Parker Field/Boulevard site to allow for the redevelopment of the area. The Radio Shop and Traffic Signal/Sign Shop operations of the Department of Public Works will be moved to the subject property.

Staff is supportive of the relocation of these operations to the site, noting that several other City functions are already operating on the expansive property. Staff finds that the proposed buildings will complement the existing buildings on the site, and the building materials are structurally durable and low maintenance. Staff notes that the overall property is not widely visited by the citizenry, and the proposed buildings will not contain public-facing functions.

Staff finds that the proposal is consistent with the recommendations of the Urban Design Guidelines and with the zoning and Master Plan Land Use designations for industrial uses for the site. Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval, with the following conditions:

- That the final plans include a landscaping plan, showing plant species, quantity, location and size at the time of installation.
- That the applicant considers planting an allee of trees in the planting strips on either side of the central corridor of the site.

- That the final plans include a lighting plan, showing make, model and finish for any light pole and fixture, as well as fixture light source and color temperature.
- That the outdoor employee break area adjacent to the Traffic Signal/Sign Shop building be located in a landscaped area (either planted or taking advantage of existing vegetation).
- That a similar outdoor employee break area be located adjacent to the Radio shop.
- That the applicant considers providing wayfinding signage internal to the site to direct visitors to the various buildings on the site.

**Staff Contact:**

Jeff Eastman, (804) 646-6348

**V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

**a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

The subject property is located on the east side of N. Hopkins Road between Jefferson Davis Highway and Cofer Road, across the street from Mt. Olivet Cemetery, another City-owned facility. The M-2 (Heavy Industrial) zoned property totals 19.58 acres of land and is improved with a number of buildings housing the Richmond Transfer Station, Department of Public Works Inspections Department, and an existing office/garage building. The majority of the site is paved and developed. There is an area of trees to the north of the proposed Radio Shop expansion, adjacent to N. Hopkins Road.

The surrounding properties on the east side of N. Hopkins Road are also zoned M-2 while the properties on the west side of N. Hopkins Road are zoned M-1 (Light Industrial). Both sides of the corridor are improved with warehouses and manufacturing facilities, with the exception of Mt. Olivet and Maury Cemeteries.

**b. Scope of Review**

The proposed building and site plan are subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as a public buildings.

**c. UDC Review History**

Staff was unable to identify any prior UDC reviewed projects involving the subject properties.

**d. Project Description**

This project involves the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at 3502 N. Hopkins Road. This is a part of the ongoing efforts to relocate City operations currently located at the Parker Field/Boulevard site to allow for the redevelopment of the area. The Radio Shop and Traffic Signal/Sign Shop operations of the Department of Public Works will be moved to the subject property.

The majority of the project site is already paved and developed. The Radio Shop building will entail the expansion of an existing building, while the proposed Traffic Signal/Sign Shop building will be constructed on an area that currently contains surface parking and a vacant fueling station. Only the canopy and a small shed remain of the fueling station and these structures will be demolished with this project. The site will be designed to meet runoff volume control and quality requirements under the 2014 Department of Environmental Quality

regulations and the City of Richmond Stormwater Management Design and Construction Standards Manual.

This project and the Commerce Road Complex project (also under consideration by the UDC in March 2015) are considered one project in the City budget. The total construction budget for both projects is estimated to be \$8 million. Construction is slated to commence in June 2015, with relocation of operations and occupancy of the new facilities scheduled to occur in December 2015. Below are details for each proposed building:

**Radio Shop Building (building #3 on plans)**

The building that will be the home of the Radio Shop currently contains 18,000 square feet and will undergo interior renovation as part of the project. The proposed expansion would add about 6,500 square feet onto the existing building on the N. Hopkins Road façade. The existing building is a pre-engineered metal building composed of beige metal panels with overhead doors for vehicle bays. The vehicle bays of the building will be utilized with the proposed use and, therefore, will not require modification. The new addition will be a pre-engineered structure with beige metal panels, to match the existing building, atop a split face CMU base. Damaged portions of the metal panel siding on the existing building will be replaced.

The expansion will provide space for offices, a break room, a conference room, restrooms and a locker room. Windows are provided along each of the three sides of the addition. Where offices are not on an exterior wall, there is a skylight in the corridor outside the office and the office wall has windows so that every office has access to natural light. The customer entrance (customers are City employees who operate fleet vehicles) to the building features double-doors flanked by full height windows, while the employee entrance contains a single door. Both doorways are protected by a metal canopy.

The area around this building is currently fenced and gated and will remain so. Parking for this building will be provided in the existing paved parking areas in the vicinity. The only proposed modification to these lots is that they will provide several landscaped islands to break up large expanses of the parking lot.

**Traffic Signal/Sign Shop Building (building #4 on plans)**

The new building for the traffic signal/sign shop will be approximately 29,150 square feet and will provide space for offices, a fabrication shop, storage, a break room, a conference room, restrooms and a locker room. This is a pre-engineered metal building consisting of a high bay section for vehicle bays and warehousing, and a lower portion for the office area. Windows are provided along each of the facades of the building. High windows provided above the low office roof will provide daylight into the warehouse fabrication areas. The main and office entrances will face towards N. Hopkins Road, and the main entrance will feature double-doors flanked by full height windows, all protected by a metal canopy. The new building façade will contain beige metal panels atop a split face CMU base to match the Radio Shop and to complement other buildings on the site.

Two underground stormwater management tanks will be provided to the west of the proposed building. Parking will be provided in the vicinity of the building. The area around this building will be fenced and will provide outdoor storage for traffic

signals and signs. On the southeastern corner of the site two spots are provided for outdoor employee break areas.

**e. Master Plan**

The subject properties are located within the Old South planning district as defined by the citywide Master Plan. The Master Plan recommends Industrial uses for this property, and defines the primary uses in this land use category as a wide variety of manufacturing, processing, research and development, warehousing, distribution, office-warehouse and service uses (page 135). There is no language in the plan specific to the subject properties or the proposed improvements.

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

In general, the Urban Design Guidelines note that “the quality, design, and condition of all public facilities sets the image of the City, and sends a message about the values placed upon the services provided” (page 13). More specifically, the Guidelines state that “a building’s entrance should be easily recognizable (page 13). The Guidelines also note that building materials “should be appropriate for the size and architectural style of the building” and that “many different materials on a single building lead to visual confusion and should be avoided” (page 17). Building materials should also be “aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require little maintenance” (page 17).

The subsection on materials continues to say that “building textures and their combinations should add continuity and not conflict or detract from each other” and that “textures should be appropriate for the size, proportion and architectural style of the building and its surroundings” (page 17). Referring to building colors, that Guidelines note that they “should be coordinated and compatible with each other and with adjacent buildings” (page 17). The Guidelines also state that “windows, projecting cornices, and architectural details, such as decorative masonry bands in an accent color, may be used to break up flat building planes” (page 19).

The Guidelines note that landscape plans should “include diverse plant species, including evergreen, flowering and shade tree species combined with shrubs, ground covers and annual and perennial plantings” and that “shade trees for pedestrian comfort should be the predominant plant material in an urban setting” (page 10).

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

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