



# City of Richmond

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## Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

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Monday, November 16, 2015

1:30 PM

5th Floor Conference Room

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### Call To Order

Mr. Poole called the meeting to order at 1:37pm.

### Roll Call

**Present** 8 - Mr. Rodney Poole  
Mr. Melvin Law  
Mr. David Johannas  
Mr. Jeffrey Sadler  
Mr. Doug Cole  
Ms. Ellen Robertson  
Ms. Selena Cuffee-Glenn  
Mr. Vivek Murthy

**Absent** 1 - Ms. Lynn McAteer

### Chair's Comments

Mr. Poole welcomed everyone who was present.

### Approval of Minutes

[a2015 -  
1551](#) November 2, 2015 Meeting Minutes

**Attachments:** [Draft November 2, 2015 Meeting Minutes](#)

Mr. Sadler was not able to access the minutes. The Commission decided to take them up at their next meeting.

**The November 2, 2015 Meeting Minutes were continued to the Commission's December 7, 2015 meeting.**

### Director's Report

Mr. Olinger reminded the Commission about the two public meetings this week including:

- (1) The Public Art Master Plan public meeting on Tuesday, November 17, 2015 at 5:30pm at the Science Museum
- (2) The Broad and East Main Street Corridor Plan kick-off public meeting on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at 5:30pm at the DMV building on West Broad Street

Mr. Poole asked about an update on the Citywide Master Plan.

Mr. Olinger stated that he is using the Broad/East Main Street Corridor Plan as a test

drive, which has become a priority. He stated that he is down 3 professional staff and does not have the resources to dedicate to the Citywide Master Plan update at this time.

Mr. Poole stated that the Master Plan is the Commission's number one priority and the Administration needs to understand that it should be on the front burner for the City. He asked for a plan of action to begin the Master Plan update in the first part of 2016.

**- Council Action Update**

Ms. Markham updated the Commission on the items the Council had adopted per the Commission's recommendations.

**Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda**

- 1. [UDC No. 2015-03\(4\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent Review of the stage canopy and sun shelters at Kanawha Plaza, 701 E. Canal Street

**Attachments:** [UDC Report to CPC](#)  
[Staff Report to UDC](#)  
[Location Map](#)  
[Application & Plans](#)

Ms. Markham informed the Commission that the Applicant has withdrawn this item as submitted and will be going back to Urban Design Committee when they are ready to move forward with the project.

**Consent Agenda**

Mr. Sadler stated that he is concerned that the Hull Street plan does not accommodate high speed or future transit. He also stated that it is difficult to look at each part of the City one at a time and make recommendations without the benefit of how it may affect the larger vision for the City. He emphasized the importance of an updated Citywide Master Plan.

**A motion was made by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Law, that the Consent Agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously, with the exception of Mr. Murthy's abstention on item number 2 regarding the new section of roadway connecting two sections of Deepwater Terminal Road.**

- 2. [UDC No. 2015-05\(2\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent Review of a new section of roadway connecting two sections of Deepwater Terminal Road

**Attachments:** [UDC Report to CPC](#)  
[Staff Report to UDC](#)  
[Location Map](#)  
[Application & Plans](#)

**This Location, Character and Extent Item was approved on the Consent Agenda.**

- 3. [UDC No. 2015-12\(3\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent Review of a parking lot expansion and a water quality treatment train in the vicinity of the Maymont Children's Farm; 800 Swan Lake Drive

- Attachments:** [UDC Report to CPC](#)  
[Staff Report to UDC](#)  
[Location Map](#)  
[Application & Plans](#)

This Location, Character and Extent Item was approved on the Consent Agenda with the following condition recommended by the Urban Design Committee:

- (1) That the applicant considers retaining the row of mature Zelkova trees in the parking lot for several years, allowing the newly planted trees time to grow and provide shade.

4. [UDC No. 2015-29](#) Conceptual Location, Character and Extent Review of modifications to Hull Street, from Chippenham Parkway to Arizona Drive

- Attachments:** [UDC Report to CPC](#)  
[Staff Report to UDC](#)  
[Location Map](#)  
[Application & Plans](#)  
[Hull Street Revitalization Plan](#)  
[Hull Street Revitalization Plan Appendices](#)  
[Ordinance Adopting the Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan](#)  
[Public Comment](#)

This Location, Character and Extent Item was approved on the Consent Agenda with the following condition recommended by the Urban Design Committee:

- (1) That the final plans include a landscape plan and schedule showing plant species, location, quantity, and size at the time of installation.
- (2) 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. It is recommended that light fixtures be full shutoff, with a color temperature of 3000k.
- (3) That all signalized intersections contain accommodations for pedestrian crossing, including striped or ladder-style crosswalks and countdown signals.
- (4) That pedestrian crossings of Hull Street contain refuge islands.
- (5) That the final plans include details on the proposed retaining walls.
- (6) That the applicant sets aside space for a City gateway sign at the western end of the corridor.
- (7) That the applicant investigates reducing lane widths to promote pedestrian safety.
- (8) That the applicant investigates reducing the turning radius at cross streets to support pedestrian safety, or provide rationale for why not to reduce the radii.
- (9) That the applicant work with the Department of Public Works to accommodate the crossing of the proposed Pocosham Greenway and investigate connectivity to the proposed James River Branch Trail.

**Regular Agenda**

5. [UDC No. 2015-19\(2\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent Review of the Greater Richmond Transit Company plans for a Bus Rapid Transit system along Broad Street, N. 14th Street and E. Main Street from the intersection of W. Broad Street and Staples Mill Road on the west to the intersection of E. Main Street and Orleans Street on the east

**Attachments:** [UDC Report to CPC](#)  
[Staff Report to UDC](#)  
[Location Map](#)  
[Final Application & Plans](#)  
[Conceptual Application & Plans](#)  
[Letters of Support](#)  
[Letters of Opposition](#)

Ms. Cuffee-Glenn thanked the Commission for their comments and input on this project during the conceptual review. She stated that this is a transformational project for the City and the region. She asked the Commission to continue their support of the project.

Ms. Carrie Rose Pace, GRTC, presented the proposed project and the changes that have been made since the Commission's conceptual review of the proposal.

Mr. Jeff Eastman presented the Urban Design Committee's (UDC) recommendation of conditional approval for the project.

Mr. Poole asked if the conditions require the applicant to return to the Planning Commission and the UDC and what the timing would be for that review.

Mr. Eastman stated that all of the conditions are not critical

Mr. Sadler asked who the riders of the BRT will be and what their employment status/locations and residences are.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that several corridors were studied and this proposal has the highest percentage of current riders who would benefit the existing riders along the corridor today.

Mr. Sadler asked how existing routes on Broad Street would be affected.

Ms. Rose-Pace explained the process for changing route, including the public engagement process. She stated these studies and processes have begun for the existing system.

Mr. Sadler asked how the BRT will interact with the local buses along Broad Street.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that BRT buses can bypass local buses and she stated that the schedule will be adjusted to avoid "bus bunching".

Mr. Sadler asked about the times savings along the corridor.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that the frequency of the buses is what will be the biggest change. Customers will be able to rely on a bus arriving every 10 to 15 minutes as opposed to every 30 to 60 minutes.

Mr. Sadler asked about how the traffic jams along 14th Street will affect the service and

if there is an alternate plan.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that technology using traffic signal timing will help with the traffic jams.

Mr. Mike Sawyer stated that the signals on 14th Street have not been retimed since 2008. He explained that the different lanes have different back-ups and the BRT will be in the left most lane which is the least

Mr. Poole asked about Governor's Street and if there is any other opportunity there.

Ms. Cuffee-Glenn stated that the City is in the process of resolving issues related to the transfer of the street to the state.

Mr. Poole stated that the BRT should be rapid and that there should be a compromise that could be reached with the state.

Mr. Sadler asked about the impact on the businesses along the corridor during construction of the BRT stations.

Mr. Sid Pawar stated that the design-build contract will include subsurface work within the sidewalk. He continued that a construction management plan will be required for each phase of the work, which must comply with the City's conditions for work within the right-of-way. He stated that VDOT will distribute the packages to all the stakeholders.

Ms. Cuffee-Glenn stated that staff from Economic and Community Development can address the City's efforts to reach out to the businesses and property owners along the corridor.

Mr. Johannas asked if there will always be a path of travel to each business along the corridor.

Mr. Pawar stated that access to adjacent properties will be required throughout the project.

Mr. Murthy asked what the accountability is if the contractor does block access.

Mr. Pawar stated that there will be incentives in the contract with the design builder to encourage timely construction and provision of access to businesses.

Mr. Cole stated that the applicant is well aware of the importance of retaining access to the businesses along the corridor.

Ms. Cuffee-Glenn agreed.

Mr. Poole recognized Mr. Cole for his efforts on the subcommittee reviewing the plans for the BRT.

Mr. Douglas Dunlap emphasized the importance of the needs of the businesses and stakeholders along the corridor. He stated that addressing the access and parking for businesses are both things that the City have been working on. He explained the outreach efforts that are occurring to directly have contact with the businesses.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that GRTC is going door-to-door with the City.

Mr. Sadler asked about park and ride lots along the corridor.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that efforts are continuing.

Mr. Sadler asked about VCU abandoning their shuttle service and having their students ride the BRT.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that they are meeting with VCU this week to begin those discussions.

Mr. Murthy asked about walkability and accessibility to the stations, particularly at Willow Lawn and in Henrico.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that those efforts are a part of the plan and Henrico is on-board. She also emphasized the connectivity study underway.

Mr. Murthy asked about the standards being used.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that there will be 10 minute headway on-peak and 15-minute off-peak.

Mr. Murthy stated that this project can really make a statement with the BRT for a small city on the east coast. He asked if the bus design is finalized.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that the buses are American made and describe the process for choosing the standard bus design.

Mr. Cole restated the concern over the traffic issues along 14th Street.

Mr. Nicholas Smith, on behalf of Partnership for Smarter Growth and RVA Rapid Transit spoke in support of the proposal.

Mr. Max Hepp-Buchanan, Bike-Walk RVA, spoke in support of the proposal.

Ms. Jo Gulbach, Richmond Association of Realtors, spoke in support of the project in terms of increasing property values and attracting residents and employers to the City and the region.

Mr. John Barret, City resident, spoke to the benefits of the proposed transit system. He asked the Commission to support the proposal.

Mr. Bernard Rodgers, Better Housing Coalition and Richmond resident, spoke in support of the proposal and its positive affect on residents in the affordable housing in the City.

Ms. Chris Harris-White, resident of the City and Henrico County Business Council, spoke in support of the project. She read a statement in support of the proposal from the Business Council.

Mr. Reggie Gordon, GRTC Board, stated that this project will be a turning point for transit in the region and requested the Commission to support the project.

Mr. Dominique Carter, Clergy Committee for Rapid Transit, spoke in favor of the proposal. He stated that over 200 churches have signed on for regional transportation and are supportive of the proposal.

Mr. Matthew Stanley, RVA Coalition for Smart Transit and President of the Fan District Association, stated that the devil is in the details and request that the Commission oppose the plan as it exists in order to give the Council a role in the process.

Mr. Marty Jewell stated that school construction and improvements should take priority over this proposal. He stated that this is not a proposal for integrated regional transit and that the jobs are located outside of the reach of the BRT. He stated that a cost-benefit analysis should be done. He stated that he is with the NAACP and requested the Commission to delay the vote on this.

Mr. Jonathan Marcus, Civic Association and Chair of RVA Coalition for Smart Transit, stated that they unanimously support better transit, which is why they are so concerned with this proposal. He stated that the transit system needs to be regional, not a 7.6 mile bus route where there is already a bus route. He expressed concern about the project targeting choice riders instead of the population that has to ride the bus because they have no other option. He stated that the transfer center must be addressed. He requested delaying the proposal for a year in order to study these issues.

Mr. Art Burton, City resident and Director of non-profit in Mosby Court, stated that the proposed BRT does not serve those who need it most. He stated that there is no plan for connectivity, particularly in Fulton. He stated that Broad Street has changed dramatically since the project was first proposed in 2003. He emphasized the importance of the businesses being involved in the plan.

Mr. Sadler asked about operational and construction overruns and how they will be handled.

Ms. Cuffee-Glenn stated that the BRT will be a part of the larger GRTC transit system and its operational cost.

Ms. Rose-Pace stated that 20% of the funding will come from the fare box and the rest would be from the City, Henrico and the state the same as it is now. She stated that there will be cost adjustments system wide.

Mr. Pawar stated that construction estimates have been reviewed by four different parties and there will be no overruns.

Mr. Law stated that he supports the item and questioned the disadvantage of a 30-day delay.

Mr. Poole asked if Mr. Law was making a motion to continue.

Mr. Law stated that he is supportive and will not allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good and this is a good project. He stated that there is overwhelming public support for the project and he will be in support.

Ms. Robertson stated that this is the beginning of a regional system and Richmond must take the first step. She stated that the Council has been involved and they would be at the meeting today if they were opposed. She expressed the importance of continuing the dialogue on the regional transportation system.

Mr. Cole stated that it is very easy to support a good plan. He complimented GRTC in their execution of the plan and the response to the Commission's concern.

Mr. Sadler extolled the importance of transit to expand people's world. He stated that the success of transit in Richmond will depend on the success of the BRT. He suggested a motion to postpone the vote on the proposal to the February 16, 2016 meeting in order to have the system wide study done, to review it and see how it will impact the cost savings and how the Pulse will interact with the buses that are currently traveling the same route, as well as access to those that are most reliant on good

transit. It will also give them time to continue looking at Governor Street or come up with an actual traffic flow plan. He stated they can continue to work with VCU to combine with them for the shuttle service, which would be huge in making sure there is consistent ridership; to continue to look at parking at the Western Terminus and to come up with a formal written communication plan for businesses and a mock up to see how it will affect traffic.

Mr. Sadler moved to continue the item to February 16, 2016 meeting. The motion failed for a lack of a second.

Ms. Cuffee-Glenn thanked all of the speakers. She stated the City has been very inclusive as it relates to the communication. Her staff, VDOT and GRTC have made themselves available with presentations for those who would come to hear the facts of this project. She stated there is the support and commitment of an array of people, all the way from the US Department of Transportation, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Henrico County, GRTC and the staff. She stated they will continue that commitment, they believe in the project and what it will do for the City and the region.

Mr. Johannas stated that he is supportive of the project because of the support for transit during the ULI's Realty Check. He stated that this is a necessary service and amenity for the City in order for it to continue to thrive.

Mr. Murthy stated that he is support of the proposal. He stated that the transit system is necessary to attract jobs and residence to the City and the region. He asked GRTC for transparency in the implementation and the costs and the success of the proposal.

Mr. Poole state that now is the time to move forward and asked Ms. Cuffee-Glenn to keep in mind the concerns of Mr. Sadler and the community as the proposal moves forward.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Cuffee-Glenn, seconded by Commissioner Johannas, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be approved with the following conditions recommended by the Urban Design Committee:**

- (1) That applicable City agencies develop, and return for UDC and PC approval, a plan to provide a buffer (planters/street trees/bike racks, etc.) in areas along the corridor where on-street parking will be removed in order to enhance the streetscape for pedestrians. This plan should also show areas where curb cuts could be closed or reduced in width to allow for additional on-street parking, following an examination by the City Department of Public Works, coordinated with GRTC.**
- (2) That the BRT planning team and the City Department of Public Works Urban Forestry Division produce a tree survey, showing the location, size and species of all trees that will be removed along the project corridor as a result of this project.**
- (3) That the BRT planning team and the City Department of Public Works Urban Forestry Division develop, and return for UDC and PC approval, a plan to provide deciduous, shade-producing street trees in areas adjacent to those where existing trees will be removed, or, if space is not available in the vicinity, in other areas along the BRT corridor.**
- (4) That the BRT planning team develop, and return for UDC and PC approval, a final landscape plan for the stations, and that the plant palette is composed of drought tolerant and native species.**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**Aye:** 8 - Mr. Poole, Mr. Law, Mr. Johannas, Mr. Sadler, Mr. Cole, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Cuffee-Glenn and Mr. Murthy



6. [a2015 - 1503](#) To approve the VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Plan as an Amendment to the City's Master Plan

**Attachments:** [VUU/Chamberlayne Plan Staff Report](#)  
[VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Plan](#)  
[VUU/Chamberlayne Motion of Intent](#)

Ms. Kathleen Onufer presented the plan and staff's recommendation of approval as outlined in the staff report. She recognized the work of Ms. Gene Williams and Mr. Gary Flowers for their dedication and contributions to the plan and the Community History on the project.

Ms. Gene G. Williams, resident of Brook Road, thanked the Commission for their service to the City of Richmond. She thanked Mr. James Hill for his management of the project. She described the process of developing the Community History for the plan. She commended Ms. Onufer and the City for taking citizens seriously. She questioned the allocation of resources to this portion of the City, stating that the adoption of the plan will be the first step in having resources allocated to the area and the appropriate infrastructure and improvement implemented in the area.

Mr. Nicholas Smith thanked the City and Ms. Onufer for their effort in revitalizing this area of the City. He spoke in support of the plan.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Cuffee-Glenn, seconded by Vice Chair Law, that this City Planning Commission Resolution be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 8 - Mr. Poole, Mr. Law, Mr. Johannas, Mr. Sadler, Mr. Cole, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Cuffee-Glenn and Mr. Murthy

### **Upcoming Items**

Ms. Markham provided a brief overview of the following projects that will be considered by the Commission at their December 7, 2015 meeting.

- Special use permit for six single-family dwelling units at 202 Rear South Robinson Street
  
- Conditional rezoning of 2801 East Main Street and 2825 East Main Street from M-1 to B-5 Conditional
  
- Special use permit amendment to remove the condominium requirement at 3101 Kensington Avenue
  
- Special use permit to waive parking for office use and two accessory dwelling units at 8 and 10 West Cary Street
  
- Special use permit for three dwelling units and a restaurant at 701 West Clay Street
  
- Closure of a portion of Brook Road to vehicular traffic to create a public plaza

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Poole adjourned the meeting at 4:06pm.

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Rodney M. Poole, Chair

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Lory P. Markham