



To: Urban Design Committee
From: Planning and Preservation Division
Date: June 6, 2019
RE: **Review of encroachments along West Franklin Street in front of Congregation Beth Ahabah, 1111 West Franklin Street ; UDC 2019-19**

I. APPLICANT

Larry Salzman, Congregation Beth Ahabah

II. LOCATION

City right-of-way in front of 1111 West Franklin Streets

Property Owner:

City of Richmond

III. PURPOSE

The application is for review of security bollard encroachments along West Franklin Street in front of Congregation Beth Ahabah

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Beth Ahabah, a historic 228-year old Jewish Congregation, is seeking to install 39 bollards along a 290' stretch on the south side of W. Franklin Street where it intersects with Ryland Street. The Congregation received a security grant from the Department of Homeland Security to harden the campus for protection against potential acts of violence. The proposed bollards will include structural foundations to provide a K-4 impact rating and will align with other street furnishings such as signs and street trees, however there will be no impact existing street trees.

As Beth Ahabah is a City Old and Historic District it will require Section 106 review, an assessment of how any federally funded project may impact historically sensitive resources in the city.

Additionally, DPW does not support the installation of encroachments in the right-of-way and suggests that the applicant team install them on private property.

There are many variables to this project that require more discussion. Therefore, Staff recommends that the Urban Design Committee recommend deferral for resubmission.

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The subject right-of-way is located at the intersection of W. Franklin and Ryland Streets and is in close proximity of the Virginia Commonwealth University Monroe Park Campus. The right-of-way is bordered on the south by

Congregation Beth Ahabah, a historic 228-year old Jewish Congregation and designated City Old and Historic District. The surrounding area lies within the R-6 (Single-Family Attached Residential) zoning district.

W. Franklin Street is a four lane, one-way vehicular street for east bound traffic. The outermost lanes on the north and south sides of W. Franklin Street are reserved for parking. Ryland Street is a four lane, two-way vehicular street for north and south bound traffic. The outermost lanes on the east and west sides are reserved for parking. Parking is not permitted where Ryland Street meets W. Franklin.

b. Scope of Review

The encroachment process is administered through the Department of Public Works, which has requested that the Urban Design Committee (UDC) provide design advice on certain types of encroachments. The UDC does not have the authority to approve encroachments, but rather provides advice to the Department of Public Works.

c. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to find any existing records related to projects involving the site, however, the UDC recently reviewed projects with bollards:

Bollard encroachments as part of modifications to the VCU School of Engineering Streetscape were reviewed at the regular June 2018 meeting of the UDC (UDC 2018-22). The proposal called for 16 bollards to be placed along the northeast corner of S. Belvidere Street and W. Cary Street due to a history of vehicular crashes. The UDC recommended the Department of Public Works approve the plan with conditions.

At the regular September 2018 meeting of the UDC, bollard encroachments were reviewed as part of the streetscape improvements for Dominion Workplace Tower 2 (UDC 2018-34). The proposal called for seven stainless steel in brushed finish bollards to be installed adjacent to the drop off loop along 8th Street to provide pedestrian protection. The UDC recommended the Department of Public Works approve the plan with conditions.

Bollard encroachments at 4813 Monumental Street, where it intersects with Staples Mill Road, were reviewed at the regular June 2013 meeting of the UDC (UDC 2013-29). The proposal called for six bollards in the planting strip. Since 2004, the residential property had been damaged five times by vehicles leaving the roadway. Former Councilman Bruce Tyler was the patron of Ordinance No.2012-181-175, which was adopted by City Council in October 2012 and directed the City to install bollards in the right-of-way in front of the private property. This proposal was to become a city appurtenance therefor it was reviewed as a Section 17.05 resulting in a recommendation to the Planning Commission rather than the Director of Public works, such as this case. At its meeting of June 17, 2013, the Planning Commission concurred with the UDC's findings of fact and voted (6-0) to approve the installation of traffic barrier subject to the following:

- That the bollards are constructed of wood, a minimum of 8" in width and depth and a maximum of 36" above grade. These bollards should contain a decorative top (truncated dome or pyramidal, for example).

- That the wood bollards are unpainted and contain some kind of reflective marker to alert vehicles to their presence
- That only 4 bollards are installed, and that the bollards on each end of the proposed plan are replaced with deciduous shade trees 2.5”in caliper at the time of installation
- The Committee strongly recommended that the Traffic Engineering division of DPW further investigate additional traffic calming measures along the block of Staples Mill Road between Monument Avenue and Monumental Street.

d. Project Description

Congregation Beth Ahabah is requesting UDC approval of an encroachment request for security bollards along their W. Franklin Street frontage. In recent months, acts of violence against Jewish Communities have been on the rise.

Congregation Beth Ahabah has received a \$100,000 security grant from Homeland Security to harden the campus against such acts. Recommendations from Homeland Security include access control at all entrances and exits, security cameras, and the installation of bollards along the W. Franklin Street frontage of the campus. Each Sunday, there are 300 children exiting the building, along with their parents and families. Frequently, on Friday nights, there are between 200 to 400 people exiting the building onto W. Franklin Street. On the High Holydays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, there are as many as 1,700 people gathering on the sidewalk. All of these events create a vulnerable soft target for anyone wishing to do harm with a vehicle.

The Congregation Beth Ahabah is located within a well-established residential area with existing, well-established street trees and a generous concrete sidewalk. The proposed security bollard installation will not require any impact to the existing street trees. The construction of the bollards will include structural foundations to provide a K-4 impact rating. The Congregation wishes to install the bollards as soon as possible in the interest of the Congregation’s safety and security.

e. Master Plan

The subject right-of-way is located in the Near West Planning District, as defined by the 2001 Master Plan, which designates the area as being Single-Family (Medium Density).

f. Urban Design Guidelines

There is no language in the Urban Design Guidelines that directly addresses the installation of bollards in the right-of-way, however, an appropriate general guideline is that “it is important that streetscapes are designed to reflect the character of the neighborhood” (page 20). The Guidelines also state that “site furnishings should be appropriately styled and scaled to complement building architecture and to reinforce the character of the streetscape” (page 24).

VI. ATTACHMENTS

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