



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia
Planning Commission



UDC 2022-27	Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent Review	Meeting Date: 12/19/2022
Applicant/Petitioner	Dexter Goode, Capital Projects Manager, Sr., Department of Parks and Recreation	
Project Description	CONCEPT Location, Character, and Extent review of the proposed Fire Department Training Facility located at 3000 East Belt Boulevard.	
Project Location		
Address: 3000 East Belt Boulevard		
Property Owner: CITY OF RICHMOND RECREATION & PARKS		
High-Level Details: <p>The applicant proposes a concept to construct a proposed Fire Department Training Facility. A three story temporary structure designed to provide hands on training with real fire and smoke response. The area around the building will be paved to facilitate fire truck access and a fence and landscaping will screen the view from the road.</p>		
UDC Recommendation		
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, Planner, raymond.roakes@rva.gov	
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	The concept was heard at the December 8 th , 2022 UDC meeting. The committee recommended approval with the conditions listed below.	
Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDC recommends that final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant. • UDC recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines. • UDC recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible. • UDC recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to include landscaping. • UDC recommends that the Applicant work with Forestry Staff to finalize Landscaping plans to relocate any recently planted trees from the work area and to plant any required remediation for removed trees. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UDC recommends that the Applicant provide further landscape plantings to include evergreen and deciduous trees.
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Findings of Fact

Site Description	<p>The site is located in the Cherry Gardens neighborhood on the South Side at the intersection of Belt Boulevard and Terminal Street. The site is zoned R-4 - Residential (Single Family) district, and of a property roughly 7 acres, or 304,048 square feet in size. The property is currently an underused community center and the specific location of the project area is an unused field. The project is surrounded largely by residential uses and wooded area. CSX/AMTRAK railroad are located to the west.</p>
Scope of Review	<p>The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 and 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter</p>
Project Description	<p>The applicant proposes a concept to construct a proposed Fire Department Training Facility. A three story temporary structure designed to provide hands on training with real fire and smoke response. The area around the building will be paved to facilitate fire truck access and a fence and landscaping will screen the view from the road.</p> <p>The Applicant states that: The Fire Training Facility will consist of an approximately 1.17-acre concrete apron for fire trucks to maneuver, a small training building, ornamental fence surrounding the site, site lighting, landscaping that includes tree and shrub planting, and required stormwater facilities. Details of the site are as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a part-time training facility The site will be secured with an ornamental fence and gate. The site will be buffered by existing wooded area and new landscape trees. All operations will take place between 8am and 5pm weekdays. Minimal noise impact the local neighborhood. The building will operate around 3 days a week when training. <p>Training is required by the State of Virginia to provide two weeks of live burns for each cycle. The site will facilitate this live training during roughly 4 weeks of the year. Each week will include four days in our burn building containers. This will produce some smoke in the immediate area and the noise level will be minimal based on fire ground activities discussed above.</p> <p>Theatrical smoke is used during training. This smoke is non-toxic but may be seen by the surrounding neighborhood.</p> <p>The use of sirens or air horns on the fire trucks will not be allowed during any of the training evolutions. The only time a resident may here sirens is if our companies are responding to an emergency from the facility. We typically only conduct one recruit training a year, but we could have more based on the city's need.</p> <p>Staff has learned that a relatively recent community tree planting has taken place on this site and in a portion of the work area. The Applicant has agreed to relocate any recently planted trees onsite and plant remediation as needed by the Forestry Division.</p> <p>Staff supports approval of this application with conditions. The Fire Training Facility is something that is an integral part of the provision of Fire services by the City. The Applicant has shown a strong desire to be respectable neighbors to surrounding residential uses in how the facility will be operated, including times and frequency and restrictions on certain training activities that generate noise. Staff believes these efforts are adequate to allow the facility to operate with a reasonable degree of minimal impact. Further landscaping provided by this project will also further attenuate any disruption.</p>

Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	Text	Staff Analysis
Master Plan		
	<p>P.70: Future Land Use Designation: Public Open Space</p> <p>Primary Uses: Open space.</p> <p>Secondary Uses: Cultural, institutional, and governmental.</p>	<p>Staff finds that the proposed use of Fire Training Facility falls under the secondary use of “Government,” as listed in the Master Plan.</p>
	<p>Objective 17.7 Increase and enhance biodiversity</p> <p><i>b. Increase the prevalence of native plant species and plants for healthy pollinator communities at public facilities</i></p> <p><i>c. Implement the RVA Clean Water strategy to use 80% native plants in new landscaping at public facilities by 2023.</i></p> <p><i>g. Encourage bird houses, bat houses, and other structures that provide important and safe shelters for wildlife.</i></p> <p>Objective 17.8 Reduce light pollution.</p> <p><i>b. Install hooded light fixtures on public rights-of-way and buildings to reduce light pollution and reduce effect on nocturnal species.</i></p>	<p>Master Plan Objectives</p> <p>Final landscaping and lighting details will be established at a later stage.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.</u></p>
Urban Design Guidelines		
PAVING AND SURFACE MATERIALS – Page 3	<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>PAVING AND SURFACE MATERIALS</p> <p>Hardscape materials will be finalized at a later stage.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to include landscaping.</u></p>
LANDSCAPING – Page 10	<p><i>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</i></p>	<p>LANDSCAPING</p> <p>A significant portion of the site is currently green space. Minimal impact is proposed to existing stands</p>

	<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>of trees. Further trees will be planted in conjunction with this project.</p> <p>A relatively recent community tree planting has taken place on this site and in a portion of the work area. The Applicant has agreed to relocate any recently planted trees onsite and plant remediation as needed by the Forestry Division.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the Applicant work with Forestry Staff to finalize Landscaping plans to relocate any recently planted trees from the work area and to plant any required remediation for removed trees.</u></p>
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