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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: October 20, 2014  
RE: **Final Section 17.05 Review of additions to the set of City-standard bike racks**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Jake Helmboldt, City of Richmond Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trails Coordinator

**II. LOCATION**

Citywide within right-of-way and on the grounds of public facilities

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for final approval of additions to the set of standard bike racks to be installed on public properties and facilities throughout the City.

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

This project is seeking approval of additions to the set of City-standard bike racks that can be installed in the right-of-way and on public properties throughout the City. In 2009, the "post and ring" style racks were established as the City-standard bike rack and to date more than 200 have been installed. However, that style rack only accommodates 2 bicycles. Some locations in the City have significant bike parking demand and racks that can accommodate multiple bikes are needed where there is adequate space for installation of a larger rack. Additionally, other rack designs provide better support and more locking points for different sizes and types of bicycles. Having several approved bike rack styles will allow City Staff (the City's Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Coordinator working in conjunction with Staff from the Department of Public Works for right-of-way installations; or representatives of the City agency who maintains the land, for example, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities) to select and install a bike rack that is best suited to the parking demand and site conditions specific to any particular location.

The Urban Design Committee finds that having the ability to install the right bike rack at the right location will reduce the potential for bikes to be attached to inappropriate objects such as benches, trashcans, sign posts, fences, parking meters, and even street trees. Furthermore, the Committee finds that by providing bike parking, and making it more available and visible, the City will be encouraging bicycling for routine transportation trips while also providing functional street furniture, improving the function of our sidewalks and better managing our public spaces.

As the applicant notes in the project narrative, having additional standard bike racks increases the opportunity to create bike racks that are unique to a business or residential district. Additionally, the 2015 World Cycling Championships seek to create awareness of the upcoming event, as well as a legacy of improved bicycling conditions in the City of

Richmond. Incorporating a logo related to the event would be an opportunity to capitalize on both of those aims of the event.

The Committee finds the proposal to be directly supportive of the Citywide and Downtown Master Plan goals of increasing bicycle usage by accommodating the needs of bicyclists. The Committee further finds that the proposed improvements are consistent with the recommendations of the Urban Design Guidelines, and will have a positive impact on pedestrian and bicycle activity along the corridor. Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant final approval as submitted.

**Staff Contact:**

Jeff Eastman, (804) 646-6348

**V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

**a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

There are no specific locations chosen for these bike racks at this time. The applicant is requesting approval of these bike rack designs as City standards to be applied throughout the City where local conditions allow. This is the same strategy utilized for installation of the previously approved “post and ring” bike racks.

**b. Scope of Review**

The proposed bike racks are subject to design review under Section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter as “public appurtenances”.

**c. UDC Review History**

The UDC reviewed and the Planning Commission approved the first City standard bike rack in 2009. That “post and ring” rack has been installed in more than 200 locations around the City, with another 150 locations pending installation before the end of the calendar year.

**d. Project Description**

This project is seeking approval of additions to the set of City-standard bike racks that can be installed in the right-of-way and on public properties throughout the City. In 2009, the “post and ring” style racks were established as the City-standard bike rack and to date more than 200 have been installed. However, that style rack only accommodates 2 bicycles. Some locations in the City have significant bike parking demand and racks that can accommodate multiple bikes are needed where there is adequate space for installation of a larger rack. Additionally, other rack designs provide better support and more locking points for different sizes and types of bicycles. Having several approved bike rack styles will allow City Staff (the City’s Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Coordinator working in conjunction with Staff from the Department of Public Works for right-of-way installations; or for public facilities installations, representatives of the City agency who maintains the land, for example, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities) to select and install a bike rack that is best suited to the parking demand and site conditions specific to any particular location.

Several individual racks are proposed: an arc, a “staple”, an inverted “U”, a “fruits and veggies” rack made to look like a carrot, and a planter. These racks are all

installed in a fashion similar to the post-and-ring rack, oriented parallel or at an angle to the curb, and in singles or multiples as space dictates. All of these racks can be customized with a decorative element incorporated into the rack as shown in several examples in the plan package. These single racks are intended to accommodate up to two bikes, with one secured to each side of the rack, and all occupy approximately the same functional footprint when in use since the bicycles define the space required. The applicant notes that the planter rack would be best when it is “adopted” by a business that would be responsible for the maintenance of the plants.

There are also higher capacity racks that are proposed: a helix and a “high roller”. The helix holds up to 6 bikes and can be installed in multiples to accommodate additional bikes as space allows. The functional footprint of this rack, with bikes secured on both sides, is 108” by 62”. There are several “high roller” racks under consideration, serving from 4 to 7 bikes, though no information is provided on the functional footprint of these racks. The plans also show an installation of multiple post-and-ring racks and sets a standard separation of 3’ when installed in groups. The group of 5 shown in the plan package, accommodating 10 bikes, has a functional footprint of 15’ by 7’.

The last type of bike storage under consideration is the bike corral, which is a large capacity bike rack placed in the street at locations where sidewalk space is inadequate to accommodate high-capacity bike parking. Corrals can have access from the street or they can use an enclosure to ensure that access occurs from the sidewalk to reduce potential conflicts with traffic on busier streets. The corral shown in the plans serves 10 bikes and has a functional footprint of 20’ by 7’.

There is money in both the City’s approved and proposed Capital Improvements Program budgets for procuring and installing bike racks. To date, staff of the Department of Public Works Bridge Division have provided the installation services for the majority of the bike racks. Future installations will continue to utilize their cost-effective services, paid for through the budget allocated in the CIP. The post-and-ring racks currently being procured are being fabricated locally as part of the City’s Workforce Development initiative which is training and certifying new welders.

**e. Master Plan**

Both the Citywide Master Plan and the Downtown Plan are supportive of increasing the use of bicycles as a mode of transportation. One policy of the Citywide Plan is to “promote ridesharing, bicycle commuting and pedestrian walkways as alternatives to the single passenger automobile” (page 33). A strategy to accomplish that goal is to accommodate the needs of bicyclists by incorporating bike lockers into the design of any new public facilities (page 38). This Plan also notes that there is a “lack of park-and-lock bicycle facilities Downtown” (page 38).

The Downtown Plan notes that “the provision of adequate bicycle parking at either end of the bicyclist’s trip” is critical to encouraging bicycle usage. “Ideally”, the Plan continues, “bicycle parking should be provided in the front of a store or building, in plain sight, easily visible from inside the store or building”. The Plan notes that “based on Richmond’s sidewalk configurations, bike racks should be placed on the sidewalk between tree wells, so that the sidewalk will remain open

for pedestrians” (page 5.25). The Plan also has an implementation strategy to install additional bike racks Downtown (page 7.3).

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Urban Design Guidelines are very supportive of bike racks, stating that they “should be installed throughout the City” and that “bike facilities should be incorporated into the design of new public facilities” (page 5). The Guidelines also note that furnishings, such as bike racks, should be durable, both in construction and finish, and be easy to maintain and to install. They should also be conveniently located but should not obstruct pedestrian circulation (page 25). Lastly, the Guidelines note that “decorative streetscape planters are not recommended, unless they will have plantings in them year-round and be well maintained” (page 24).

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

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