



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Urban Design Committee

Report to the Planning Commission

UDC 2023-01	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 2/21/2023
Applicant/Petitioner	Thomas Westbrook, City of Richmond Department of Public Works	
Project Description	CONCEPT Location, Character, Extent review of the Bridge Replacement on Hull Street over the Manchester Canal	
Project Location		
Address: 113 Hull Street		
Property Owner: City of Richmond		
<p>City of Richmond Department of Public Works is proposing to replace an existing bridge on Hull Street, at the Manchester Canal, due to structural deficiencies.</p> <p>The bridge span will be replaced and associated street improvement work is proposed.</p>		
UDC Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, Raymond.roakes@rva.gov , 804-646-5467	
Previous Reviews	N/A	
Staff Recommendations	<p><u>Recommended Conditions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> UDC recommends that any street lights replaced in conjunction with this project be replaced with the Manchester Style Street Lights. UDC recommends that the Applicant work with appropriate City departments to maximize the width of the sidewalk and confirm lane widths within the project area to appropriately address the transition from Mayo Bridge to the Hull Street Commercial Corridor for inclusion in the FINAL submission. UDC recommends that any new or replaced sidewalk provide a connection to the existing parking lot located at 101 Hull Street for FINAL submission. UDC recommends that any chain link fence replaced by this project's funding be painted matte black where appropriate. UDC recommends that the Applicant ensure that any street work included in this project is coordinated with the ongoing Hull Street Streetscape Improvement project and that any fixtures, style of apprentices, or other design decisions carry through to this project from the Hull Street Streetscape Improvement Project. 	

	<p>6. UDC recommends the Applicant show on plans that an anti-graffiti sealant be applied on the bridge sides to protect against damage from vandalism – for FINAL submission.</p> <p>7. UDC recommends the Applicant to include landscaping as part of the FINAL Submission.</p> <p>8. UDC recommends the Applicant to provide analysis of traffic calming to be included in the project and related changes to the plan for FINAL submission.</p>
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Findings of Fact

Site Description	<p>The bridge is located within the City of Richmond limits on Hull Street over the Manchester Canal, just south of the intersection of Hull Street and Manchester Road and the Mayo Bridge. The Manchester Canal runs east/west under the bridge, the Floodwall Park Hull Street entrance is located to the north of the site, and the rapidly developing portion of Manchester at Hull Street begins to the south.</p>
Scope of Review	<p>The proposed bridge replacement is subject to design review under Section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter as a “public structure”.</p>
Project Description	<p>The purpose for this project is to replace the existing structurally deficient bridge carrying Hull Street (State Route 360) over the Manchester Canal to eliminate a structurally deficient bridge from the City’s inventory.</p> <p>The roadway at this location on Hull Street is classified as an “Other Principle Arterial” with a posted speed limit of 25 mph. The existing 65-foot and 7-inch, single span structure was constructed circa 1920. Two lanes in each direction and a 6-foot and 6-inch sidewalk on either side exists currently along the bridge. The road extending from the bridge is two lanes in each direction but turns into one lane in each direction with street parking that converts into a commuter lane at rush hour roughly one block south. The sidewalk leading up to the existing bridge is currently an average of 5-foot wide.</p> <p>The proposed bridge will also consist of two lanes in each direction. Lanes will be reduced in size from current width in order to provide a wider sidewalk on the bridge span. The new bridge sidewalk will be 8-foot and 6-inches wide.</p> <p>The sides of the bridge will be constructed of concrete and will include stamp imprints of “Manchester” and the Richmond City seal to improve visual quality and achieve neighborhood and Master Plan goals of increasing identification signage at the entrances to the neighborhood.</p> <p>Streetscape improvements along the Hull Street Corridor, including the project area, are currently under development and the Applicant has coordinated the proposed bridge project with the streetscape improvement plans.</p> <p>In an agreement with the Streetscape project, the proposed bridge project will remove and replace existing sidewalk from the traffic signal at the Railroad Museum to the Floodwall. Replacement will involve some realignment to the location of sidewalk and the width of street travel lanes.</p> <p>The project location acts as the transition between the Mayo Bridge and the Hull Street commercial corridor. DPW Staff should work in preparation for the FINAL application to appropriately address this transition to encourage pedestrian safety and calm vehicle speeds. Vehicle speeds and driver behavior are affected by both lane width, turning radius, and the degree of straightened travel lanes.</p> <p>There is also an opportunity to provide expanded sidewalk width along the northwest side of the street where the City owns a majority of the adjacent property. The current proposed plan also relocates existing sidewalk to create wider travel lanes by removing some very small portions of landscaped space. The Applicant should work with Staff to balance sidewalk needs and the needs of the travel lanes in these locations. The southeast side of the street will be more difficult as most of the property is owned privately and includes a grade change adjacent to the ROW, but there may be opportunity for some improvement there as well. The north sidewalk provides a connection from the Floodwall</p>

	<p>Park to the rest of Manchester. PDR Staff fully supports provision of the larger sidewalk and does not support replacement with same width sidewalk as existing.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the Applicant work with appropriate City departments to maximize the width of the sidewalk and confirm lane widths within the project area to appropriately address the transition from Mayo Bridge to the Hull Street Commercial Corridor for inclusion in the FINAL submission.</u></p> <p>Subsequent to this project, the Streetscape project will install street furniture. Staff suggests that this arrangement will satisfy the recommended condition “Staff recommends that the Applicant ensure that any street work included in this project is coordinated with the ongoing Hull Street Streetscape Improvement project and that any fixtures or style of apprentices or other design decisions carry through to this project from the Hull Street Streetscape Improvement Project” in relation to street furniture.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the Applicant ensure that any street work included in this project is coordinated with the ongoing Hull Street Streetscape Improvement project and that any fixtures, style of apprentices, or other design decisions carry through to this project from the Hull Street Streetscape Improvement Project.</u></p> <p>There is also a parking area adjacent to the project site that is owned by the City of Richmond and used to access surrounding park areas. Currently a desire path has been worn in the grass between the parking lot and street sidewalk. The Applicant has agreed to provide a connection at that location.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that any new or replaced sidewalk provide a connection to the existing parking lot located at 101 Hull Street for FINAL submission.</u></p> <p>Staff supports approval of this CONCEPT application with the recommended conditions. The bridge itself fits in character for the neighborhood and Staff supports the neighborhood identification signage to improve visual quality. Ensuring proper connections between this project, the Mayo Bridge replacement project and ongoing Hull Street Streetscape project is very important for a coherent streetscape and similar sidewalk with as the proposed bridges should be maintained in the locations indicated by the report above.</p> <p>The UDC discussed more closely matching the existing sides of the bridge, preservation of existing pavers at the entrance for the former train depot, pedestrian crossings, landscaping, sidewalk width, design of visual elements of bridge, and requested that project be coordinated with the future Mayo Bridge Project and ongoing Hull Street Streetscape Project regarding Section 106 review and traffic flow for FINAL application.</p>
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Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	Text	Staff Analysis
Richmond 300 Master Plan	<p>Objective 4.1.e</p> <p><i>e. Encourage development that respects and preserves the natural features of the site through sensitive site design, avoids substantial changes to the topography, and minimizes property damage and environmental degradation resulting from disturbance of natural systems.</i></p> <p>Goal 9: Streets, Bridges & Connections</p> <p><i>Building and improving Richmond's street network and bridges is critical to connect our neighborhoods to one another and provide multiple routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit moving around the city. (pg. 122)</i></p>	<p>This proposal helps meet the Goal 9 outlined in the Richmond 300 Master Plan by replacing an existing structurally deficient bridge that has been rated “poor” by VDOT.</p>

	<p>Objective 9.2: Improve and Create Bridges</p> <p><i>a. Develop and implement a plan to rehabilitate and repair city bridges so that less than 10% of bridges are rated as structurally deficient and all bridges have been substantially renovated and maintained.</i></p>	
Urban Design Guidelines		
Community Character, Illumination	<p><i>Consistent levels of illumination should be maintained in public areas. Safe and comfortable circulation depends more on the consistency of illumination than on the level or brightness of the lighting. All light sources should be shielded to reduce glare, spill light, and wasted light.</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission approved in 2017 a typical “Manchester Style Streetlight” that should be provided anytime a street is replaced within the Manchester Area.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that any street lights replaced in conjunction with this project be replaced with the Manchester Style Street Lights.</u></p>
Building Design and Detail Durability and Maintenance (P. 15)	<p><i>Where appropriate, substances that resist graffiti should be applied to building materials to reduce maintenance requirements.</i></p>	<p><u>Staff recommends the Applicant show on plans that an anti-graffiti sealant be applied on the bridge sides to protect against damage from vandalism – for FINAL submission.</u></p>
Walls, Fencing, and Screening <i>Chain Link Fencing</i> P. 22	<p><i>Chain link fencing is not an appropriate fencing material. It is the policy of the City Zoning Administration not to accept chain link with blinds as an appropriate screening material. The blinds are not durable and often disappear. If chain link is required, however, for safety or security purposes, the entire structure (fabric, posts and railings) should be coated with a dark colored vinyl, preferably black, and supplemented with sufficient evergreen landscaping. Barbed wire and razor wire are not appropriate fencing materials in most situations.</i></p>	<p>Currently, chain link fence located along the ROW is on private property. Staff has requested that if any chain link fence is replaced by this project, potentially due to construction interference, that any replaced chain link fence be painted black. In cases if only a portion of the fence is replaced, it would make sense to replace matching surrounding fencing.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that any chain link fence replaced by this project’s funding be painted matte black where appropriate.</u></p>