



**Staff Report**  
**City of Richmond, Virginia**



**Urban Design Committee**

Report to Planning Commission

UDC 2022-05	Final Review      Meeting Date: 3/10/2022
<b>Applicant/Petitioner</b>	Jeannie Welliver, City of Richmond Department of Public Works
<b>Project Description</b>	Final location, character, and extent review of the removal of a highway marker at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Harwood Street.
<b>Project Location</b>	
<b>Address: 400 Richmond Highway</b>	
<b>Property Owner: City of Richmond</b>	
<b>High-Level Details:</b>	
<p>On behalf of the City of Richmond, the Department of Public Works requests a final location, character and extent review for permission to remove a 'Jefferson Davis Highway' marker from the intersection of Richmond Highway and Harwood Street. The marker is an asset of the Department of Public Works and is located in the City Right of Way.</p> <p>The site plan show the removal of the marker, and replacement of the site with seeded lawn consistent with the surrounding area.</p>	
<b>UDC Recommendation</b>	Approval
<b>Staff Contact</b>	Alex Dandridge, <a href="mailto:alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com">alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com</a> , (804) 646-6569
<b>Previous Reviews</b>	None.
<b>Conditions for Approval</b>	None.

## Findings of Fact

Site Description	The subject site is located on a traffic island planted with grass within the intersection of Ingram Street, Harwood Street, and Richmond Highway.
Scope of Review	The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter.
Project Description	<p>In the 1930s, the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected several ‘Jefferson Davis Highway’ road markers along U.S. Route 1. On December 14, 2020 Richmond City Council unanimously adopted ORD 2020-153, renaming the city portion of U.S. Route 1 from ‘Jefferson Davis Highway’ to ‘Richmond Highway’, citing that “the name Jefferson Davis Highway is not reflective of contemporary community culture”. The City has removed monuments and statuary associated with the Confederacy and the removal of this marker is consistent with the continued intent of the City to do so.</p> <p>Justification for this application for review is further rooted in the City Charter and the City Code. Code §30-100 outlines the purposes of the zoning ordinance. The ability to remove the marker will (3) Promote health, sanitation and general welfare, as well as (7) Facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community. Charter § 2.04 of the Charter provides the City power to make regulations for the preservation of the morals of the city and its inhabitants. The representation of white supremacy and the legacy of slavery in prominent public places through these markers is of questionable morality.</p> <p>This ‘Jefferson Davis Highway’ marker is located in the grass island of the public right of way, enclosed by Richmond Highway, Harwood Street, and Ingram Avenue. It is located in the 8<sup>th</sup> City Council District and is directly adjacent to the 6<sup>th</sup> Council District. This area and the surrounding Richmond Highway streetscape will be subject to a proposed Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Richmond-Jefferson Davis highway (Route 1) Widening project. The extent of the VDOT project is from Richmond Highway’s southern intersection with Chesterman Avenue to its intersection with Fairfax Avenue. VDOT held a public meeting for this project on September 25, 2018. Upon removal of the ‘Jefferson Davis Highway’ marker, site treatments by the City will be withheld in lieu of planned improvements resulting from the VDOT project.</p> <p>The stone marker will be carefully removed from its foundation utilizing a mortar chisel by trained masons as was the disassembly practice utilized for all recent Monument Avenue confederate monument pedestal foundations. The marker will be cataloged and stored in a secure site owned and controlled by the City of Richmond.</p>

## Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	TEXT	STAFF ANALYSIS
<b>Richmond 300 Master Plan</b>	<i>City-wide vision: In 2037, Richmond is a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, innovative, sustainable, and equitable city of thriving neighborhoods, ensuring a high quality of life for all.</i>	Information and analysis provided by the applicant states that the existing highway marker is not in-keeping with the ideals in the contemporary community along Richmond Highway. The city-wide vision stated in the City of Richmond’s Master Plan emphasizes the importance of creating neighborhoods that are equitable, diverse, and welcoming to all visitors, current residents, and potential residents.
<b>Urban Design Guidelines</b>	<i>“Landscape plans should include diverse plant species, including evergreen, flowering and shade tree species combined with shrubs, ground covers and annual and perennial plantings. Plant materials should be adaptable to existing soils, climatic and lighting conditions, and be disease resistant. Native plant species are encouraged, but not required” (pg. 10).</i>	Staff finds that the proposed reseeding of disturbed areas is in-keeping with the City of Richmond’s Urban Design Guidelines.  Generally, it would be preferred that a traffic island within an intersection include landscaping or some other feature that would add interest to the streetscape, however due to the planned streetscape improvements and street widening, it is likely anything placed here in place of the road marker will be disturbed by construction in the near future. Therefore, staff would not recommend that anything other than seeded lawn be planted here.