



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: November 16th, 2020
RE: **Final location, character, and extent review of Warwick Road Maintenance Facility Improvements; 6120 Warwick Road; UDC 2020-17**

I. APPLICANT

Louis Goode, City of Richmond Special Capital Projects

II. LOCATION

1620 Warwick Road

Property Owner:

City of Richmond Department of Public Works

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final approval of improvements to the Warwick Road Maintenance Facility including new parking spaces, lay-down yard, driveway, landscaping, and canopy structure.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The Warwick Maintenance Facility's lay-down yard is losing space that currently houses and stores city maintenance vehicles and equipment, due to the construction of a new telecommunications tower. The site improvements proposed with this project would create a secured lay-down yard in a currently unused space.

The deteriorated driveway through the site will be repaved, including parking spots in front of the maintenance building. TrueGrid permeable pavers will be utilized in the parking areas to the south and east of the main drive through the site, as well as within the lay-down yard, reducing the amount of impervious surface on site. The new lay-down yard will be screened using a combination of fencing and large trees, as well as large and small evergreen shrubs.

The Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the final design as submitted.

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The site is located at 6120 Warwick Road and is zoned R-3 Residential (Single-Family), located on 4.06 acres. The site consists of Fire Station #23, a maintenance office building, and a lay-down yard for maintenance equipment.

A new communications tower, which was reviewed by the Urban Design Committee and approved by the Planning Commission in 2016, is being constructed on site.

b. Scope of Review

The improvements associated with this project are subject to location, character, and extent review as a “public building or structure” in accordance with Section 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter.

c. UDC Review History

UDC 2020-12; Conceptual location, character, and extent review of Warwick Road Maintenance Facility Improvements took place at the Urban Design Committee’s August 2020 meeting. The Committee recommended that the project be approved by Planning Commission with the following conditions:

- Applicant consider pervious paving materials for the parking spaces in front of the maintenance building.
- The new fencing installed as screening around the new lay-down yard be wooden and stained a neutral color.
- Larger shade trees proposed in the landscape plan be prioritized on the west and south side of the new lay-down yard to further enhance screening from Warwick Road.
- For gravel parking spaces, if grade allows, applicant consider setting first layer of gravel in a stabilizing grid to further protect the gravel from being washed away.
- Applicant consider the feasibility of locating the new canopy structure in the northeastern portion of the lay-down yard, away from Warwick Road, so that it may be less visible from the main road.

Subsequently, the Planning Commission approved the project with UDC’s conditions at their August 17th, 2020 meeting.

UDC 2016-52; A new public communication facility at Fire Station #23 underwent final location, character, and extent review by the Urban Design Committee at the regular December 2016 meeting. The Urban Design Committee recommended that the Planning Commission grant final approval of the plan as submitted. Subsequently, the Planning Commission approved the application at their regular December 2016 meeting with the Urban Design Committee’s recommendation.

d. Project Description

A new telecommunications tower is being constructed in the existing maintenance facility's lay-down yard located at the corner of Warwick Road and Labrook Concourse, behind Fire Station #23. This tower is one of several that is part of a regional initiative to improve communications and connectivity between citizens and the locality’s emergency systems. Consequently, the current maintenance facility’s lay-down yard is losing space that currently houses and stores city maintenance vehicles and equipment. The site improvements proposed with this project would create a secured lay-down yard in currently unused space.

The City of Richmond has contracted with Timmons Group to handle the design and construction oversight of the maintenance facility’s improvements. The

project consists of constructing a new parking lot, creating a secured lay-down yard for facility equipment and vehicles, and improving entrance driveways. A tree survey and condition assessment have been performed to document the overall integrity of the on-site trees. The maintenance staff have reviewed the project in detail and support the improvements being proposed with this project.

Demolition and removal of the existing driveway will be done at the outset. Minimal tree clearing will be necessary with this project and only five trees are planned for removal, with strict preservation measures in place for the remaining trees to be preserved in proximity to construction activity. To offset removal of these five trees, the landscape plan proposes a replacement ratio of at least 1:1 for diameter at breast height of removed tree and diameter at breast height of replacement trees. Power will be routed to all site lighting. The plan calls for the construction of a canopy structure that will protect maintenance equipment from the elements. The canopy structure will be 50 feet in length and 20 feet in width. It will be open air in design and constructed of wood, with a minimum height of eight feet. The lay-down yard will be surrounded by fencing with a minimum height of eight feet, paired with landscaping per City ordinances to provide enough screening from the adjacent thoroughfare, Warwick Road. The specific equipment / vehicles proposed to be stored in the new lay-down yard are:

- Four (4) crew cab trucks,
- Three (3) 12' trailers,
- One (1) 18' trailer,
- One (1) 12' tractor with batwings,
- Two (2) 18' tractors with batwings,
- One (1) tractor with frontend bucket, and
- Five to six (5-6) snow plows and spreaders.

Storm water management will be handled via underground pipe detention so as to limit the above-ground footprint and not take up needed real estate. The site parking program, fifty (50) total spaces, will provide an adequate number of spaces to accommodate the number of employees (44 employee spaces, 3 ADA spaces, 3 visitor spaces) on a given shift. Parking spaces on the south side of the maintenance building are proposed to be asphalt, while the parking spaces on the south and east sides of the driveway will be gravel.

At the August 2020 UDC Meeting, the Committee conceptually reviewed this project and recommended that it be approved by Planning Commission with several conditions. The applicant has responded to those conditions in this final submission in the following ways:

- **Applicant consider pervious paving materials for the parking spaces in front of the maintenance building.** TrueGrid permeable pavement is now being proposed in 3 specific areas of the site: lay-down yard, angled parking spaces to the east, and the parking spaces closest to the fire station parking lot.
- **The new fencing installed as screening around the new lay-down yard be wooden and stained a neutral color.** Due to the nature of the proposed use within the laydown yard, and in an effort to keep overall project costs down, a more secure and cheaper fence type will be used. The applicant is proposing to use black vinyl coated chain-link fence.

- **Larger shade trees proposed in the landscape plan be prioritized on the west and south side of the new lay-down yard to further enhance screening from Warwick Road.** This recommendation was adhered to and is reflected in the submitted landscape plan.
- **For gravel parking spaces, if grade allows, applicant consider setting first layer of gravel in a stabilizing grid to further protect the gravel from being washed away.** The top of the TrueGrid permeable pavement is installed with a rigid system to enhance stabilization of aggregate fill material.
- **Applicant consider the feasibility of locating the new canopy structure in the northeastern portion of the lay-down yard, away from Warwick Road, so that it may be less visible from the main road.** The proposed canopy structure has been relocated within the lay-down yard in an effort to reduce its visibility from Warwick Road.

Construction could start as early as January of next year for the facility if funding is awarded.

e. Master Plan

The project site is located in the Midlothian Planning District, which is identified by the City of Richmond’s current Master Plan. Although the Warwick Road Maintenance Facility is not specifically mentioned in the Master Plan, the plan does mention the continued growth of the district through different housing opportunity areas and large developments, calling for an improvement in infrastructure. An updated maintenance facility with proper amenities and storage for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of existing and future infrastructure is necessary.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines state that “impervious pavement should be minimized on a site to limit storm water runoff and heat gain” (pg. 3), and that “pervious pavement materials should be used whenever possible for parking areas” (pg. 4). The applicant has agreed to utilize TrueGrid permeable pavement in the parking areas to the south and east of the main drive, and also with in the new laydown yard.

Regarding existing trees, the Urban Design Guidelines note that “Significant healthy trees should be preserved and maintained” (pg.10). The project team has completed a tree survey and will be preserving as many healthy trees as possible, with the exception of five trees that will be impacted by construction. Any trees that are removed will be replaced.

The Urban Design Guidelines state that, “all trash receptacles, dumpsters, fuel tanks and significant building mechanical equipment on the exterior of a building should be screened” (pg. 25). The trash receptacle onsite is currently screened and will remain screened. “Evergreen tree and/or shrub plantings should be located adjacent to walls and fences to strengthen their screening ability. Evergreen trees and /or shrubs should also be placed adjacent to large screening enclosures to improve their appearance” (pg. 26). Large trees, as well as large and small evergreen shrubs, are being proposed along all new fencing around the new lay-down yard, adding additional screening from Warwick Road.

Regarding fencing, the Urban Design Guidelines state that “In most instances, chain link fencing is not an appropriate fencing material. If chain link fencing is required, however, for safety or security purposes, the entire structure should be coated with a dark colored vinyl, preferably black, and be supplemented with sufficient evergreen landscaping” (pg. 26). The applicant is proposing chain-link fencing which will be coated in a black vinyl material and be supplemented by evergreen shrubs and larger trees.

The Urban Design Guidelines state that, “Facilities required for the ongoing operation of the building, such as loading docks, maintenance sheds, or HVAC equipment” should be screened from view or located in the rear” (pg. 14). The new canopy structure for the storage and protection of maintenance equipment will be screened by fencing and landscaping.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

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