



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: October 15, 2018
RE: **Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent Review of Southside Community Center building addition, 6255 Old Warwick Road; UDC 2018-37**

I. APPLICANT

Chris Frelke, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities

II. LOCATION

6255 Old Warwick Road, Richmond, VA, 23225

Property Owner:

City of Richmond C/O Chief Admin Officer

III. PURPOSE

The application is for the conceptual location, character, and extent review of a building addition to the Southside Community Center 17.98 acres in the Midlothian Planning District.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds the project to be well-considered in regards to design and aesthetic. The use of materials and color add to the interest and nature of this facility as a gathering place for the community. Providing visibility into the internal programming of the building enhances security. Staff further finds that the provision of natural light is conducive to the mental and physical health of the users of the space.

Thus, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval as submitted, with the following conditions:

- That the final plan provide a planting plan and schedule, with special consideration given to external areas of the building that may have large expanses of wall such as the auxiliary multipurpose court, utility pump room, etc.
- That the final plan provide a lighting plan, considering the use of LED with a 3000k correlated color temperature or less

Staff Contact:

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The location of the proposed addition is on a 17.98 acre site, the former campus of the Richmond Outreach Center, formerly known as the ROC Church. In addition to the Gymnasium and the former sanctuary building, an assortment of pre-existing, poor condition buildings of various scale and utility are situated on site, including a small skate park, a multi-use field, three baseball fields, and expansive parking areas.

b. Scope of Review

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

c. UDC Review History

At the regular June 2018 meeting, the UDC recommended that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval of the Southside Community Center Master Plan (UDC 2018-23) with the following conditions:

- That the final plans address, for any aspect of this proposal, sustainability as detailed in the Urban Design Guidelines such as, but not limited to:
 - The utilization of pervious pavement for the parking areas
 - An increase in programming to address stormwater drainage
 - Additional trees to be planted along the trail and within the parking lot islands
- That the final plan consider the position of the softball field to ensure stray balls do not negatively impact oncoming traffic
- That the final plan consider access between the trail and the parking lot to the north of the softball field
- That the final plan provide a comprehensive planting plan and schedule
- That the final plan provide a lighting plan, considering the use of LED with a 3000k correlated color temperature or less

At the regular June 2016 meeting of the UDC, the original application (UDC 2016-19) came forward for final review, however all the subsequent staff reports, recommendations, and approvals referenced that the application came for conceptual review. The UDC recommended that the application be approved, conceptually, with the condition that:

- The final plans for any projects show how the project will address sustainability as detailed in the Urban Design Guidelines

The regular June 2016 meeting of the Planning Commission saw this UDC 2016-19 approved on the consent agenda with the conditions put forth by the UDC.

d. Project Description

The City of Richmond’s Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities envision the Southside Community Center as a regional gathering place for community and recreational activities. The project will provide interactive, lively spaces for community wellness and recreation activities. The building program includes an Auxiliary Gymnasium, Boxing Studio, community interaction spaces, video and sound studios, a culinary teaching kitchen, and support administration spaces. The project will feature a unique Indoor Playground encouraging active-play with interactive, educational and technological attributes. The mezzanine provides flexible programming and wheelchair accessibility to the second-floor spaces that are proposed for renovation in the existing Gymnasium structure.

The first meeting with the community was held on November 19, 2015 and consisted of a short presentation of various program elements, both interior and exterior. The public comment period lasted over an hour, indicating how passionate this community is about their parks and recreation. All age groups

were represented and a common theme of 'giving the children a place to go' was expressed again and again.

On February 18, 2016, the design team held a second community meeting to present the proposed master plan. Each element of the plan, including interior programming, was isolated and described. Feedback was again obtained through public comment and written response.

Based on input received during the community meetings and coordination with Parks and Recreation, a masterplan was finalized and presented to UDC for Conceptual Review in May of 2016.

Subsequently, two major decisions were made by the Parks/Recreation and Capital Projects division that caused the need for the master plan to be updated.

1.) All of the existing buildings, except the existing Gymnasium structure and accessory building to the west, are in disrepair and costing a great deal of money to maintain in their current condition. The need to demolishing these structures is immediate; demolition design documents will be submitted for permitting this fall.

2.) The expense of the pool and related facilities are difficult to justify and the project budget will no longer support this program element.

The Master Plan was revised, submitted for conceptual review and approved, with conditions, in June this year. The finalized masterplan is included for reference.

e. Master Plan

The Master Plan for this area does not designate this as an area for parks & recreation due to the fact that it was private property at the time; it is designated in the existing land use map of that plan as an institutional/semi-public use to reflect its former use as a semi-private recreation area. The general recommendations for this area are supportive of more parks & recreation access provided they can be adequately maintained, secure and safe for surrounding neighborhoods, and take drainage concerns into account.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines note that "a preference should be given towards materials and construction techniques which improve energy efficiency and water/soil quality. Lighting and landscaping should allow for surveillance and policing activities, but should be designed primarily to accommodate the intended use of the park" (p. 9).

Under the Public Facilities of the guidelines, it states "Building materials should be aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require little maintenance. Where appropriate, substances which resist graffiti should be applied to building materials to reduce maintenance requirements... Building textures and their combinations should add continuity and not conflict or detract from each other. Textures should be appropriate for the size, proportion and architectural style of the building and its surroundings. Reflectivity, durability and color of the texture should be considered." (p. 17)

The guidelines go on to say that “The use of multiple colors may be appropriate on a building elevation. However, no more than three different colors should be used on one plane. Combinations of extremely dark colors or a monochromatic approach to painting should be avoided. The color choice should be appropriate for the building material. Bright, vibrant colors are usually more appropriate as building accents or as accent colors on signs.” (p.17)

Furthermore, the guidelines note that “there may be instances...when a building's facade design should not relate to neighboring buildings. This may be the case if there is no general design theme in the neighborhood or if neighboring buildings have been significantly or inappropriately altered over time. A building should have an easily recognizable, inviting and accessible entrance on its facade. The use of special exterior paving, lighting and landscaping is encouraged to highlight a building's entrance.” (p. 18)

VII. ATTACHMENTS

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