



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia
Urban Design Committee



UDC 2021-36	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 9/9/2021
Applicant/Petitioner	Kathryn Giles Garrison, Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities	
Project Description	Conceptual location, character, and extent review of the West Broad Green Conceptual Plan	
Project Location		
Address: 3001 W. Broad Street		
Property Owner: City of Richmond		
High-Level Details:		
<p>In 2019, the City approved a plan for streetscape improvements along W. Broad Street from N. Hamilton Street to N. Laurel Street. As an extension of this work, the City began to explore how to improve the circulation and open space near the intersection of Cutshaw Avenue and W. Broad Street. This draft concept plan for the open space referred to as West Broad Street Green works to improve the pedestrian experience and provide quality open space to serve the adjacent communities and visitors to the area.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Approval	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com , (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	None.	
Conditions for Approval	None.	

Findings of Fact

<p>Site Description</p>	<p>The subject right-of-way and parcel is bound by W. Broad Street to the north, Cutshaw Avenue to the south, Belmont Avenue to the west, and is bisected by Wayne Street. The parcel is located within the TOD-1 zoning district. The Scott's Addition Pulse GRTC stop is located to the northwest on W. Broad Street. A majority of the project area consists of a triangular parcel of grass, trees, and small plantings, as well as sidewalks, streets, and an area of asphalt where W. Broad Street, Cutshaw Avenue, and Sheppard Street meet. The existing green space is maintained and landscaped by community volunteers from surrounding civic associations who have implemented several community amenities such as pathways, native plants, picnic tables, and chairs.</p>
<p>Scope of Review</p>	<p>The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter.</p>
<p>Project Description</p>	<p>The W. Broad Street Conceptual Plan includes site, roadway, lighting, and streetscape improvements within the right-of-way and city parcels between Cutshaw Avenue and W. Broad Street, between N. Belmont Ave. and N. Sheppard St. The scope of improvements is limited to the development of conceptual functional layouts to resolve traffic operations, pedestrian and bike facilities, and access associated with the area. A summary of proposed improvements is listed below.</p> <p>Wayne Street: The portion of Wayne St. between Cutshaw Ave. and West Broad St. is proposed to be closed to create a larger continuous green space for the park, in-keeping with the goals of PCRF.</p> <p>Cutshaw Avenue: Convert Cutshaw Ave. to one-way westbound, between N. Belmont Ave. and N. Sheppard St. This creates a safer pedestrian environment and allows for more green space on the north side of Cutshaw Ave. A Woonerf condition is envisioned, where Cutshaw Ave. could be temporarily closed to vehicle traffic for special events, such as farmer's markets.</p> <p>City stormwater drainage improvements: Detailed calculations have not been completed during this conceptual phase, but there is an opportunity to treat and store stormwater onsite. There is a bio-filter proposed at the SW corner of W. Broad St. and N. Sheppard St.</p> <p>Lighting: All street lighting is to include installation of both pedestrian and vehicle/pedestrian light poles and luminaires. Specific fixtures to be approved by the City and DPU to confirm power source available.</p> <p>Hardscape: Proposed hardscape material consists of scored concrete sidewalks, brick paver sidewalks and travel lanes, and stabilized decomposed granite pathway. Pervious pavers may also be an option, if feasible.</p> <p>Tree Wells: 5'x10' opening, typical, with no raised edging.</p>

Tree Varieties: A mix of Larger shade trees (i.e., Willow Oak) and smaller, single-stem, ornamental trees have been proposed on this plan. Refer to proposed plant palette for further details. All proposed trees will be reviewed and approved by City arborist and PCRf staff.

Existing Trees: There are a few mature trees within the limits of work that may warrant preservation. It is the intention of this plan to work around the existing trees and plant material that exist on the site today.

Existing Planting Beds: The site is maintained and planted with native species by community volunteers in partnership with PCRf. The conceptual plan reflects the work that has been completed by volunteers, and identifies “Flexible Open Space” to allow the site to continue to adapt to the communities vision and needs.

Water Resources: This project is not subject to either Chesapeake Bay Preservation or Floodplain requirements. The proposed land disturbance includes updating existing impervious surfaces with an expected net decrease in impervious areas by increasing pervious landscaped areas.

DPU – Gas / Water / Sewer: Proposed work is not anticipated to have an impact on the gas, water, or sanitary sewer mains.

On-Street Parking: Eliminated parking along the north side of Cutshaw Ave., between N. Belmont Ave. and N. Sheppard St, to provide more flexible open space within the park.

Site Furnishings: Bike racks, benches, and trash receptacle will be provided, per City standards, and surface mounted. Existing wooden tables and benches will remain on site until such time as PCRf relocates or replaces them. The future possibility of installing place making furniture, such as Adirondack chairs, is noted on the plan and reflects community feedback.

Bike Share Station Locations: TBD by the Department of Public Works.

Movable Seating: Currently there are no outdoor café seating areas within the 12 foot pedestrian zone. There is not sufficient area to allocate for café seating without elimination of some tree pits to provide enough pedestrian clearance around any delineating barriers. This can be a site-specific evaluation.

Driveway Closures: Proposed locations are shown based upon traffic safety, site layout, and adequate site access from other driveway locations; all closures would be tentative pending City review and property owner input and notification. Close existing driveways along the south side of Cutshaw Ave. between N. Belmont Ave. and N. Sheppard St. Curb ramps will be provided, per VDOT and City standards.

Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	TEXT	STAFF ANALYSIS
Richmond 300 Master Plan	<p><i>The Richmond 300 Master Plan states that “public parks serve a vital role to the health and well-being of Richmond’s residents and its environment. (pg. 99).</i></p> <p><i>The City of Richmond’s Master Plan, Richmond 300, speaks to the improvement of Public Parks in vision #4, stating that the City should encourage the creation of a balance of natural rather than hard landscape in creating and improving parks (4.3.k) and that the city should strengthen the streetscape connections by installing pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks, pathway, and trails where such infrastructure is missing (4.4.b) (pg. 104).</i></p>	<p>The W. Broad Street Green Conceptual Plan aims to improve an existing green space that is becoming more important as the surrounding area develops. While the site is already maintained and planted by community volunteers, the plan is designed to build off with what work has already been done, adding additional seating, native plantings, and identifying space that can be planted with additional beds, or used as “Flexible Open Space” to allow the site to adapt to the communities vision and needs.</p> <p>Currently the parcel is divided by Wayne Street between W. Broad Street and Cutshaw Avenue. The Conceptual Plan proposed to remove Wayne Street in this location, connecting the parcel and creating a continuous green space.</p> <p>Cutshaw Avenue will be made one-way west bound, and the sidewalk along W. Broad Street will be continued to Sheppard Street, creating a complete sidewalk connection in this location.</p>
Public Parks	<p><i>Successful public parks, both small and large, active or passive, share certain qualities, which include the ability to attract and entertain visitors, access and connectivity to surrounding areas, and safety and comfort” (pg.9)</i></p>	<p>The subject parcel is located in an area between the Museum District Neighborhood and the Scott’s Addition Neighborhood, an area of the city that is in need of more quality green space for its growing population. The parcel is located in a central location that will serve both of these areas.</p> <p>A Pulse, BRT, station is located just to the northwest of the site on W. Broad Street, making this location accessible to those who are utilizing the BRT.</p> <p>There is also the opportunity to include a bike share station in the area.</p>

<p>Design Considerations</p>	<p><i>A preference should be given toward 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. (pg. 9)</i></p>	<p>Currently, the eastern end of the project is an open asphalt area that is dangerous for pedestrians to cross and confusing to vehicles. This conceptual plan proposes to enhance this area by creating a new sidewalk and a planting bed which will serve as a bio retention area for storm water run-off. Hardscape will be transformed into greenspace that will collect water from W. Broad and the surrounding street, creating a more attractive, functional, and safe location.</p>
<p>Park Maintenance</p>	<p><i>All park projects should include a maintenance plan which addresses all phases of the project” (p.9), and that “Significant healthy trees should be preserved and maintained” (p.10)</i></p>	<p>This conceptual plan proposes to retain all existing, healthy trees and native plantings, and to add additional green space and native trees, shrubs, and ground covers.</p> <p>The park is actively maintained by volunteers in conjunction with PRCF.</p>
<p>Landscaping</p>	<p><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. Shade trees for pedestrian comfort should be the predominant plant material in an urban setting” (pg. 9)</i></p>	<p>The conceptual landscape plan consists of all native species that would provide four season interest. All plants have been selected from the Parks and Recreation plant palette for this site.</p>
<p>Paving Materials</p>	<p><i>Impervious material on a site should be minimized to limit stormwater runoff and heat gain. Preference should be given to pervious pavement materials that allow for stormwater recharge, especially in minimally used parking areas, such as park and sport facility parking areas. (pg. 3)</i></p>	<p>Scored concrete and brick pavers are currently being proposed, as well as pervious, decomposed granite. The applicant has stated in the application that other forms of pervious hardscaping could be considered. Pervious pavement would be dictated by location, traffic volume, and budget.</p>
<p>Provision of New Sidewalk</p>	<p><i>New development should provide sidewalks along streets where there are currently no sidewalks or sidewalks in disrepair (pg. 4)</i></p>	<p>Currently the eastern end of the project area is asphalt. This conceptual plan proposes to add a new sidewalk and planting area in place of the existing asphalt. This new layout will be safer for pedestrian circulation, providing a complete sidewalk network.</p>