



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Urban Design Committee

UDC 2022-09	Final Review	Meeting Date: 5/5/2022
Applicant/Petitioner	L. Dexter Goode Senior Capital Project Manager, CoR Special Capital Projects	
Project Description	Final location, character, and extent review the new CoStar Campus pedestrian plaza.	
Project Location		
Address: 6255 Old Warwick Road		
Property Owner: City of Richmond		
<p>A pedestrian plaza is proposed as the intersection of S. 5th Street and Tredegar Street as part of the new CoStar Richmond Campus.</p> <p>Though privately owned, the pedestrian plaza will be a publicly accessible amenity.</p>		
Staff Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com , (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	None	
Conditions for Approval	<p>Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant consider further ways of increasing the active use of the proposed pedestrian plaza. • A terraced pedestrian entrance be provided at the intersection of S. 5th Street and Tredegar. • Additional canopy trees be provided within the lawn area to increase opportunities for shade. • Trash receptacles be provided strategically throughout the plaza, and specifically at each entrance to the site. • Additional illuminated bollards, or other fully shielded light fixtures, be provided along the perimeter walkways within the pedestrian plaza. • An additional paved path be provided directly from this intersection to the dining area and retail space (bisecting the flexible lawn space). 	

Findings of Fact

<p>Site Description</p>	<p>The CoStar Richmond Campus site is composed of two parcels located in the City of Richmond, at 600 Tredegar Street and 501 S. 5th Street, zoned B4. The parcels are 3.896 acres and 3.155 acres respectively and located on the city block bounded by S. 5th Street, Tredegar Street, S. 7th Street, and Bragg Street. The 501 S. 5th Street site currently houses the existing CoStar office building and associated parking structure. The area surrounding the site consists of a mix of urban commercial uses, office uses, and parks, with the adjacent area consisting of museums, high-rise office buildings and green spaces.</p> <p>The site is generally sloping from the north to the south. There is a 50-foot drop in elevation from the S. 5th Street and Bragg Street intersection to the S. 5th Street and Tredegar Street intersection. S. 5th Street is generally sloping down 6%-12% toward Tredegar Street. Bragg Street is also generally sloped 6%-10% from S. 5th Street down to the east toward the existing access entrance for 501 S. 5th Street garage. On-site drainage north of the existing access road off of S. 5th Street drains to an inlet adjacent to the garage and discharges into the combined sewer system in Bragg Street. Drainage south of the access road drains into storm-only inlets in S. 5th Street and Tredegar Street and into the Canal. Runoff from the existing 501 S. 5th building discharges via laterals into the combined sewer system in 7th Street.</p> <p>Across Tredegar Street to the South is Brown's Island accessed by pedestrian bridges at the foot of 5th and 7th Streets. Street trees, an asphalt pedestrian sidewalk and City standard Granville streetlight fixtures are provided along the streetscape.</p> <p>Across 5th Street is the Civil War Museum, Gambles Hill and Ethyl Corporation headquarters. A concrete sidewalk and City standard streetlight Granville fixture are provided along the streetscape.</p> <p>Across 7th Street is the Federal Reserve Building. A concrete sidewalk with security planters and bollards are provided along the streetscape.</p> <p>Across Bragg Street (a private street co-owned by CoStar and the Federal Reserve) is a Federal Reserve parking deck. A concrete sidewalk, City standard streetlight Granville fixtures and street trees are provided along the streetscape.</p>
<p>Scope of Review</p>	<p>The pedestrian plaza 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.</p> <p>This review is required per Sec. 30-440.3 (B-4 Central Business District, Yards) of the City of Richmond Zoning Ordinance, which states:</p> <p><i>A front yard with a depth greater than permitted by subsections (1)a through c of this section may be provided when such front yard is improved for purposes of a pedestrian plaza, outdoor dining area as permitted by Section 30-440.1 or vehicular drop-off or pick-up area permitted by Section 30-440.4:1, and is approved subject to a plan of development as set forth in Article X of this chapter. Except where the property is within an old and historic district, the City Urban Design Committee shall review the application and plans and submit a recommendation to the Director of Planning and Development Review prior to approval of such plan of development by the Director.</i></p>
<p>Project Description</p>	<p>The CoStar Richmond Campus development includes construction of a new 21-story office tower on the north side of the site designated as Foundry Park North and 6-story tower on the south side of the site designated as Foundry Park South, entry pavilion, below and above grade parking structures, outdoor green areas, a retail village and a pedestrian plaza along Tredegar Street.</p> <p>The project includes streetscape improvements along 5th and Tredegar Streets as well as the south side of Bragg Street. The streetscape will consist of brick and concrete sidewalks and street trees.</p> <p>The B4 zoning district requires a maximum front yard setback of 10' from Tredegar Street. A pedestrian plaza providing for flexible spaces to support a retail village and visitors alike</p>

	<p>will be installed along Tredegar Street. The plaza permits a front yard greater than 10 feet, subject to Urban Design Committee approval.</p> <p>The project will be privately funded, with construction, estimated to begin in 2022 with substantial completion anticipated approximately three years after the start of construction.</p> <p><u>This review will only focus on the proposed pedestrian plaza</u></p> <p>The plaza is designed to provide pedestrian access by taking into consideration the sites existing topography. Accessible access is provided from the 5th at the western edge of the plaza and Tredegar at the eastern edge of the plaza with a set of risers at the mid-point. A low wall holds the edge of the plaza as street grade falls along 5th and Tredegar to the intersection at the southwest corner of the site. Hardscape is orthogonal to the building and creates a “pedestrian street” with gathering and amenity areas north and south of the street. The team is working with a historian and an art consultant in the process of incorporating art / sculptures into the site.</p> <p>It should be noted that the property is also part of the Richmond Riverfront Development Corporation and is subject to restrictive covenants outlined in the agreement. The corridor along Tredegar, pre the covenants, is to be used for pedestrian oriented uses, such as retail. The development team has met with Venture Richmond’s Architectural Review Committee and obtained approval of the design included in this package. The plan is to be considered by Venture Richmond’s Executive Committee on April 29th, with approval anticipated.</p> <p>Plaza hardscape will consist of concrete unit pavers and some concrete paving.</p> <p>Building perimeter and plaza planting will include a mixture of shrubs, perennials and ground covers of various container sizes. Plant material at grade will be placed in a premium topsoil mix.</p> <p>Plants on planting palette will be selected considering existing and proposed plants. Selected plants will be the same if not similar (in height, form or color) to establish relationship and visual contiguity.</p> <p>Plant materials have been preliminarily selected utilizing the City of Richmond Urban Design Guidelines, Appendix 5, adopted in December of 2011 and the Native Plants for Northern Virginia a reference prepared by plantnovanative.org.</p> <p>An automatic controlled irrigation system will be utilized to water the plant material on grade. It is anticipated that a mixture of bubblers for trees and drip irrigation with sensors in planting beds.</p>
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Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	TEXT	STAFF ANALYSIS
Richmond 300 Master Plan	<p>Objective 4.1 <i>Create and preserve high-quality, distinctive, and well-designed neighborhoods and Nodes throughout the city.</i></p> <p><i>j. Apply design standards, guidance, and regulation consistently across the city regardless of market conditions or rent structure of development.</i></p> <p><i>m. Require the podiums of tall buildings to reflect the human-scale, with design elements and active uses on the ground level.</i></p>	<p>Master Plan Objectives</p> <p>The Master Plan generally calls for high-quality and distinctive design throughout the city. This includes ensuring that human-scale design is implemented at the pedestrian level of major buildings and that design standards and guidance be applied consistently across the city regardless of market conditions.</p> <p>The Master Plan also generally calls for public art to be integrated into new development. Art provides an opportunity to enhance the pedestrian environment and call attention to and celebrate central public spaces and locations.</p>

	<p>Objective 4.2 <i>Integrate public art into the built environment</i></p> <p><i>d. Encourage outdoor art features on private land and buildings as part of a city building aesthetic.</i></p> <p>Objective 4.3 <i>Increase neighborhood access</i></p> <p><i>f. Require any new development along the river and canals to provide for public access and activated ground levels (see Goal 2 and Goal 15).</i></p> <p><i>j. Implement the Richmond Riverfront Plan and the James River Park Master Plan.</i></p>	<p>Public access and activated ground levels are required of any new development along the canals, including the Haxal Canal adjacent to this site.</p> <p>Taking these requirements into account together, opportunities to provide quality public space and pedestrian experience should be encouraged – especially in locations where they could provide the most impact. The intersections of two highly traveled pedestrian travel routes, along the Haxal Canal Walk, and at the primary pedestrian entrance to the Browns Island event space should be considered as a high profile location that deserves a high-quality and distinctive design.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends the applicant consider further ways of increasing the active use of the proposed pedestrian plaza.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that plans for the pedestrian plaza located at the corner of 5th Street and Tredegar Street be revised to reflect greater connectivity to the street and a direct pathway from the intersection to the proposed retail space.</u></p>
<p>Richmond Riverfront Plan</p>		
	<p>Reynolds North/Canal Walk</p> <p>New construction and adaptive reuse of existing structures to incorporate ground level retail beneath upper floors of residential and commercial office space</p> <p>5th Street from Browns Island northward is designated as a “Streetscape Connection” which encourages ample street trees and other landscaping along with quality pedestrian features.</p>	<p>The Riverfront plan calls for active uses at the ground floor pedestrian level for new development along the canal. The plan also states that 5th Street, from Browns Island northward, should include enhanced pedestrian features, including ample street trees.</p> <p>The proposed plans address the requirement for 5th Street Streetscape Connection, but should continue to be revised, per other sections of this report, to enhance ground level activity and pedestrian quality.</p>
<p>Urban Design Guidelines</p>		
<p>Public Facilities, Site Features, pg. 14</p>	<p><i>The provision of plazas adjacent to buildings serving the public is encouraged. The design of such plazas should avoid large changes in grade from the street. Plazas should provide a pleasant transitional environment for pedestrians from the street to the building(s) it serves. Public plazas should use landscaping, public art, and historic preservation to create inviting spaces. Adequate seating, lighting and trash receptacles should also be provided in the design of plazas.</i></p>	<p>The pedestrian plaza will be elevated approximately 3.5 feet from street level at the intersection of S. 5th Street and Tredegar Street. Currently, the plaza is not accessible at this elevated point and is enclosed by a 3.5 foot fence. To help soften this transition and make the plaza more inviting and accessible to pedestrian users, <u>staff recommends that a terraced pedestrian entrance be included at this intersection.</u></p> <p>Plans for the plaza also show that a mixture of street and canopy trees will be provided around the perimeter of the plaza, supplemented by ornamental plantings. Staff</p>

		<p><u>recommends that additional canopy trees be provided within the lawn area to increase opportunities for shade.</u></p> <p>The plans also show intentions of providing movable furniture in and around a lawn area.</p> <p>Public art is proposed to be included to the east of the pedestrian plaza, but is outside of the scope of this review.</p>
<p>Community Character, Placement, pg.25</p>	<p><i>Site furnishings should be conveniently located for the pedestrian, but should not obstruct pedestrian circulation.</i></p> <p><i>Furnishings should be located where people congregate, such as at bus stops, in front of major attractions, and in parks and plazas. The placement of furnishings should not create visual clutter on the streetscape.</i></p> <p><i>Furnishings may be grouped together, where appropriate. However, trash receptacles should be placed in the vicinity of bench groupings, but not directly adjacent, because of wasps and other insects in summer months.</i></p>	<p>Information has not been provided on the provision of trash receptacles. <u>Staff recommends that trash receptacles be provided strategically throughout the plaza, and specifically at each entrance to the site (including at S. 5th and Tredegar).</u></p>
<p>Community Character, Illumination, pg. 22</p>	<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>Illuminated 45" bollards will be used along the sidewalk surrounding the plaza. Information on lighting within the plaza has not been provided. <u>Staff recommends that additional illuminated bollards, or other fully shielded light fixtures, be provided along the perimeter walkways within the pedestrian plaza.</u></p>
<p>Transportation, Paving and Surface Materials, pg. 3</p>	<p><i>The selection of appropriate paving materials should be based upon the following: desired visual image, compatibility with adjacent paving materials, performance, durability, maintenance requirements, and cost.</i></p> <p><i>Consideration should be given to the massing of impervious material, the heat impact of paving material, and the stormwater runoff caused by paving material. Landscaping should be used to break up large expanses of impervious paving material.</i></p> <p><i>Consideration should be given to the massing of impervious material, the heat impact of paving material, and the stormwater runoff caused by paving material. Landscaping should be used to break up large expanses of impervious paving material.</i></p>	<p>Surrounding the central lawn features, the plaza will feature large concrete unit pavers. Staff is supportive of the use of both pervious lawn features in conjunction with concrete pavers.</p> <p>To complement the new pedestrian entrance to the plaza at S. 5th and Tredegar, <u>staff recommends that an additional paved path be provided directly from this intersection to the dining area and retail space, bisecting the lawn.</u> This path may use concrete pavers similar to what is proposed elsewhere on the site, or brick pavers to match the public sidewalks surrounding the plaza.</p>