



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia
Urban Design Committee



UDC 2022-24	Final Review Meeting Date: 11/10/2022
Applicant/Petitioner	Bill Boston – Department of Public Utilities, Stormwater
Project Description	FINAL location, character, and extent review of the Greening Greater Fulton project
Project Location	
Address: ROW for 4900 and 5000 blocks of Government Road	
Property Owner: City of Richmond/ Adjacent Commercial Properties	
High-Level Details: Innovate Fulton, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and Groundwork RVA have partnered together to create a concept plan for stormwater retention infrastructure and environmentally sustainable streetscape improvements along Government Road between Williamsburg Road and Carlisle Avenue. The project will include permeable pavement, street trees, rain gardens, a small pedestrian plaza, and a public art installation. The project will enhance the pedestrian experience; further many citywide sustainability and environmental goals; increase business attraction; and provide important investment in transportation and green infrastructure in an area that is historically underinvested and low income.	
UDC Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, raymond.roakes@rva.gov , (804) 646-5467
Previous Reviews	The concept was heard at the July 7, 2022 UDC meeting. At the meeting, the Committee voted to recommend approval with no conditions. The concept was approved at the July 18, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting
Conditions for Approval	Staff recommends that the existing pedestrian scale lighting and other existing pedestrian furnishings within the project area be maintained and re-used with the proposed project.

	Staff recommends that the Applicant revise plans to make minor adjustments to meet ADA requirements and widen the sidewalk width to 6ft in the northern half of the project area.
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Findings of Fact

Site Description	The subject project includes the right-of-way of Government Road between Williamsburg Road and Carlisle Avenue. While the project impacts all of the parking areas for businesses adjacent to the project area, only a portion of the privately held parking areas adjacent to the right-of-way in the 4900 block (northern section) of Government Road will be altered in relation to this project. The project is located within the B-2 Community Business zoning district. No bus stops are located within the project area, however GRTC Bus Line 56 (South Laburnum) runs through the project area. A majority of the project area consists of paved area currently used by adjacent businesses for parking and access to their own parking areas and includes existing sidewalks, streets, street trees, power poles and street lights. The existing ROW landscaping is maintained by the City of Richmond; existing tree wells are primarily planted with <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> (Crepe Myrtle).
Scope of Review	The project is subject to conceptual location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter.
Project Description	The Greening Greater Fulton project includes site, roadway, lighting, and streetscape improvements within the right-of-way on Government Road between Williamsburg Road and Carlisle Avenue. The scope of improvements is to provide stormwater retention facilities, rain gardens, permeable pavement, pedestrian infrastructure, and public art. The project will not affect existing intersections or ADA ramps. A summary of proposed improvements is listed below. Stormwater Facilities: A landscaped depressed catchment area is provided on the 5000 block of Government Road (southern section). Rain gardens are provided on the 4900 block of Government Road (northern section). Images provided from the applicant's plans submission. Sidewalk/Pedestrian Infrastructure: The existing sidewalk will be renovated. The sidewalk is proposed to remain roughly the same size as the exiting sidewalk path at 5 feet wide. Lighting: Existing pedestrian scale street lamps and vehicle scale lights attached to utility poles are provided throughout the site. The pedestrian scale lamps are shown to be maintained and re-installed as part of the proposed project. The pedestrian scale lamps are of good quality and are representative of similar lighting found in the surrounding neighborhood.

Staff recommends that the existing pedestrian scale lighting be maintained and re-used in the proposed project.



Hardscape/Permeable Pavement: Sidewalk material will meet the standard requirements of the Department of Public Works for concrete public sidewalks.

Permeable pavement is proposed between the sidewalk and edge of the right-of-way in the southern section. This section of permeable pavement will facilitate access and act as a drive isle from the street to existing adjacent business parking areas. Permeable pavement will be maintained by Public Works and two years of maintenance after installation has been included in the project budget.

A roughly 450 square feet permeable art and pedestrian plaza will also be provided in the northern section.



HEXAGON PERMEABLE
CONCRETE PAVERS
Images provided from the applicant's plans submission.

PERMEABLE ART PLAZA

PAVER INSTALLATION

After discussion with Public Works Staff, the applicant has agreed to amend plans to provide a 6ft wide sidewalk on the northern half (4900 block of Government Road) of the project area. The Applicant and DPW have also identified some minor changes to the plans to meet the requirements for ADA access. It has also been determined that the proposed design does not preclude provision of future sidewalk along any of the east/west roads through the project area.

Landscaping: The project creates a safer pedestrian environment and allows for more green space and stormwater retention.

A continuous tree lawn is proposed between the sidewalk and street curb, rather than smaller and more confined tree wells, which will facilitate greater tree health.

Street Trees: A mix of flowering trees (i.e., Yellowwood, Redbud, and Magnolia) have been proposed. See the proposed plant palette for further details. Nine (9) trees will be removed and seventeen (17) will be added with the project. All proposed trees will be reviewed and approved by City arborist and PCRF staff.

Plantings: Greenspace will have native or adaptive low growing plants and small trees, see the proposed plant palette for further details. The rain gardens will be appropriately planted to take into account a higher amount of moisture.

Water Resources: The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is a partner on the project and has helped to design the stormwater retention facilities and rain gardens to a high degree of effectiveness.



TREE LAWN AT JUNCTION

Images provided from the applicant's plans submission.



TREE LAWN



TREE LAWN STRIP

Public Art: To be located in the proposed pedestrian/art plaza and within the rain gardens. A final art plan was approved by the Public Art Commission on September 22.



On-Street Parking: No street parking is currently provided along the project area within Government Road. No street parking is proposed.

Site Furnishings: Due to the provision of depressed stormwater facilities, locations for further site furnishings such as trash and benches are limited. Outreach to the community has received several requests from citizens that benches not be provided in relation to this project.

At least one trash receptacle is located within the project area, Staff recommends that they be maintained and re-used within the project area.

Maintenance: Innovate Fulton and GroundWork RVA have partnered to create a green jobs initiative known as Launch Fulton Green Jobs Initiative. The Initiative will engage young residents from the community in job training programs that allows them to participate in both the construction and maintenance for the project.

Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	TEXT	STAFF ANALYSIS
Richmond 300 Master Plan	<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> <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</i>	The Project aims to improve an existing section of streetscape that is primarily impervious with a new high quality green space and landscaping along with stormwater retention facilities and improved pedestrian infrastructure.

	<i>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>	
Public Parks	<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>	The subject parcels are located in a central commercial area of the Greater Fulton Neighborhood, an area of the city that is in need of more quality green and pedestrian space. Enhanced streetscape will also contribute to the success of surrounding businesses as more users are attracted to the area.
Design Considerations	<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>	Currently, the existing pedestrian infrastructure consists of an open asphalt area that is dangerous for pedestrians to cross and confusing to vehicles. This project proposes to enhance this area by creating a more defined sidewalk to help demarcate safe egress for both pedestrians and vehicles. A planting bed is proposed that will serve as a bio retention area for storm water run-off. Hardscape will be transformed into greenspace that will collect water from the surrounding street, creating a more attractive, functional, and safe location.
Park Maintenance	<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>	This project proposes to create new green space with native or adaptive trees, shrubs, and ground covers. Existing street trees will be removed, but a greater number of trees will be planted than removed. Enhanced landscape areas will be installed to replace existing tree wells. As such, removal of exiting trees is required to implement improvements. The green space will be partially maintained by volunteers in conjunction with the City Public Works. Public Works will maintain the proposed permeable pavement.
Landscaping	<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</i>	The proposed landscape plan consists of native or adaptive species, both flowering and nonflowering, that are appropriate for locations with high moisture such as the proposed rain gardens and stormwater facilities.

	<i>predominant plant material in an urban setting” (pg. 9)</i>	
Paving Materials	<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>	The goal of the project is to improve stormwater runoff in an existing underserved area via landscaped stormwater facilities and pervious pavement.
Provision of New Sidewalk	<i>New development should provide sidewalks along streets where there are currently no sidewalks or sidewalks in disrepair (pg. 4)</i>	The site is currently served by sidewalks. All existing sidewalks are maintained in to a similar existing extent or improved.
Fixture Design	<i>The finish on street lights and site furnishings should coordinate. (pg. 19)</i>	Any street lights and street furnishing to be installed or re-installed from the existing site should coordinate in finish.