

City of Richmond

*900 East Broad Street
2nd Floor of City Hall
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 6, 2022

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Urban Design Committee

1. Public Access and Participation Instructions - Urban Design Committee

Attachments: [10_06_2022_Public_Access_and_Participation_Instructions_-_Urban_Design_Committee](#)

Call to Order

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes

2. Meeting Minutes - February 10, 2022

Attachments: [Meeting_Minutes_-_February_10,_2022](#)

Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan noted that he was present for the February meeting and needs to be marked present in the minutes.

A motion was made by Committee Member Doyle, seconded by Vice Chair Clarke to approve the February 2022 minutes.

3. Meeting Minutes - March 10, 2022

Attachments: [Meeting_Minutes_-_March_10,_2022](#)

A motion was made by Committee Member Pearson, seconded by Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan to approve the March 2022 minutes.

4. Meeting Minutes - May 5, 2022

Attachments: [Meeting_Minutes_-_May_5,_2022](#)

A motion was made by Committee Member Doyle, seconded by Vice Chair Clarke to approve the May 2022 minutes.

5. Meeting Minutes - July 7, 2022

Attachments: [Meeting_Minutes_-_July_7,_2022](#)

A motion was made by Committee Member Doyle, seconded by Vice Chair Clarke, to approve the July 2022 minutes.

6. Meeting Minutes - August 4, 2022

Attachments: [Meeting_Minutes_-_August_4,_2022](#)

A motion was made by Committee Member Doyle, seconded by Vice Chair Clarke to approve the August 2022 minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

Secretary's Report

7. Learning Session - "Placemaking" by Priti Patel, Project for Public Spaces

Attachments: [Placemaking Presentation](#)

Committee Chair Quilici introduced Priti Patel from Project for Public Spaces for a special learning session titled, "Placemaking in Action."

Community Member Priti Patel provided a presentation.

CONSENT AGENDA

REGULAR AGENDA

8. Final Location, Character, Extent review of the Greening Richmond Public Libraries project for the East End Branch Library.

Attachments: [UDC 2022-19 UDC Report to CPC](#)

[Staff Report to UDC](#)

[Application](#)

[Narrative](#)

[Plant Pallet](#)

[Plans \(CURRENT\)](#)

[Plans \(OLD\)](#)

[Amended Plans Staff Note](#)

Planner Roakes presented the application.

The applicant, Drew Harrigan with Four Winds Design, detailed the community engagement his team undertook during the design process. He indicated that community members were in favor of the design and provided input on additional elements needed, such as shade.

Member Woodson asked Harrigan to confirm that Glyphosate would not be used.

Applicant Harrigan confirmed that maintenance staff would be hand-removing all weeds.

Vice Chair Clarke suggested that the plant material used should not contain insecticides.

Member Gemmer asked about the curb cut on the corner and the ramp that would be removed. She stated that ramps should not be placed at curb corners if possible.

Applicant Harrigan said that the ramp is outdated and in bad shape. They have petitioned DPU for new curbing and accessibility infrastructure.

Member Mignardi said red maples drop sap which could be an issue with cars in the spring so another native species may be better.

Member Wehunt asked who will be responsible for maintenance and if they have Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional and/or other stormwaters certifications.

Applicant Harrigan stated that all Richmond Public Libraries are maintained by a third-party landscape contractor and that they do not currently have any stormwater

certifications and that formal certifications are not required by the Richmond Public Libraries maintenance manual.

Chair Quilici asked if the current design replaced the proposed permeable pavers with the bioretention and parking areas.

Applicant Harrigan confirmed that the permeable pavers were removed from the design saying that they were too expensive.

Chair Quilici asked about the potential for benches and pedestrian-scale lighting for better security.

Applicant Harrigan said there is an issue with loitering around the branch but there may be potential for seating in the future. He added that they intend to repair existing building-mounted fixtures.

Member Woodson said that any outdoor recycling and trash bins shall have covers.

Applicant Harrigan said there will be new trash and recycling bins.

Member Wehunt asked if the plan has been reviewed by the city's water resources division and added that other stormwater BMPs have been installed in other locations that were affected by the brake dust from nearby bus stops.

Applicant Harrigan said they have spoken to DPW.

Chair Quilici opened the floor for public comment.

Jenn Clarke from RVAH20 said that they are in support of the design and the Greening Richmond Public Libraries initiative. They love the community engagement, inclusion of green infrastructure, rain barrels, and can catalyze future green infrastructure partner projects.

No Public Comment was received.

A motion was made by Member Hepp-Buchanan, seconded by Member Woodson to approve the application as presented.

Vice Chair Clarke said she thinks the plan is great but that she has maintenance concerns.

A motion was made by Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan, seconded by Committee Member Woodson, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

9. Conceptual Location, Character, Extent review of the Leigh Street Streetscape Improvement project.

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Application](#)
[Narrative](#)
[Plans](#)
[Public Input - Bolecek](#)

Planner Roakes presented the application.

The applicant, Chris Daily with VHB, pointed out the project is a Smart Scale project and was generated from a previous road safety audit. He added that they are trying to improve multi-modal mobility and calm traffic.

Committee Member Mignardi asked about the width of the multi-use path and noted that different tree species should be considered since tulip poplars grow large and need a lot of space.

The Applicant answered 10 feet.

Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan asked if there was any consideration for the planned Fall Line Trail.

The Applicant said the Fall Line Trail alignment is still in flux but that they are aware that it is proposed to run on Leigh Street.

Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan said that the decorative asphalt would distinguish itself from the sidewalk on the south side of the street. He suggested additional signage.

Committee Member Pearson asked why the plan is for a multi-use path instead of a protected bike lane or bike path and how the design will tie in with other bike infrastructure.

Applicant Daily said the design will tie into dedicated bike lanes on the viaduct and future facilities, as well.

Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan noted that other cities with heavier bike traffic have used multi-use paths in their downtowns and it works well.

Chair Quilici asked why there is no multi-use path on both sides of the street.

Applicant Daily stated that the scope of the project was agreed upon between the City and the State and was established early on.

Chair Quilici commented that the plan should adapt to new conditions that have evolved such as the City Center Redevelopment Plan.

Committee Member Woodson agreed with concerns that the plan might interfere with future plans for the Colosseum.

Committee Member Gemmer asked about the length of the sidewalk on the southside. John Bonghi with VHB said it ranges from 9 to 20 feet.

Committee Members discussed the widths of the existing sidewalks, bike lanes, and proposed changes.

Committee Member Pearson said it is a lost opportunity to not include dedicated bike lanes since the street is a major east-west corridor. Doyle agreed.

Committee Member Wehunt asked about the project funding and the road safety audit. She also expressed concerns that the street conditions are very different than when the project was first conceived.

Applicant Daily said the 7.5 million total cost for project coming from Smart Scale funding and that the safety audit was completed in 2019, before he began working on the project.

Committee Member Gemmer asked if there are any sustainability or green infrastructure goals within the plan brief.
The Applicant said no.

Chair Quilici suggested measures to soften the edges for pedestrians such as lighting and public art.

Chair Quilici opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

A motion was made by Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan, seconded by Committee Member Gemmer, to approve the application with the recommendation that the southside sidewalk be widened to 10 feet.

Member Hepp-Buchanan said it's legal to ride your bike on the sidewalk and there will be plenty of room for cyclists to transition to the bridge with a widened sidewalk while also accommodating pedestrian traffic.

Chair Quilici said that make sure to provide a flexible design that could accommodate future connections.

Member Wehunt expressed concerns that this plan would limit future attempts to bring 5th street up to grade and reconnect the grid.

Member Doyle questioned if it was possible to reduce the width of the multi-use path to create a bike lane.

A motion was made by Hepp-Buchanan, seconded by Gemmer, to approve the application with the following recommendations:

- 1) Applicant to maintain a minimum of 10ft pedestrian path along the south side of Leigh Street throughout the project area.
- 2) Acknowledge on plans and in the narrative opportunities for future connections along the lower portion of Leigh Street to surrounding streets and any future plans (such as the Downtown Master Plan, Fall Line Trail, or other bike infrastructure plans) that might impact the proposed design or provide an opportunity to connect to other transportation networks.

A motion was made by Hepp-Buchanan, seconded by Gemmer, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be approved with conditions.

Recommend Conditions:

- 1. Applicant to maintain a minimum of 10ft pedestrian path along the south side of Leigh Street throughout the project area.**
- 2. Acknowledge on plans and in the narrative opportunities for future connections along the lower portion of Leigh Street to surrounding streets and any future plans (such as the Downtown Master Plan, Fall Line Trail, or other bike infrastructure plans) that might impact the proposed design or provide an opportunity to connect to other transportation networks.**

The motion carried by the following vote:

- 10.** Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent review for the Calhoun Recreation Center - Park Renovation project.

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Application](#)
[Narrative](#)
[Plans](#)

Planner Roakes presented the application.

The applicant, Scott Wiley from Timmons Group, said he is working on behalf of the City's Parks and Recreation Department and in close collaboration with the City's Office of Equitable Development. This project will tie into the greater Jackson Ward redevelopment efforts. He noted the robust community engagement efforts and the need for quality green space in the area.

Committee Member Gemmer asked about the long green space at the bottom with no planned programming and the lighting plans.

Applicant Wiley said there is existing lighting along the streetscape but there are opportunities to improve fixtures.

Member Gemmer asked if the comfort station is a bathroom and if there will be any grills.

Applicant Wiley said the comfort station will indeed be a bathroom. There will not be any permanent grills but there may be opportunities for flexible grill space.

Member Gemmer said ash cans would be an important part of trash management.

Vice Chair Clarke asked about the outdoor kitchen space and the potential for a pollinator meadow.

Applicant Wiley said the space will connect with and enhance the Gilpin Community Farm. It will be a covered space with flexible grills and countertops. He noted that a pollinator space next to the garden is a great idea. The natural play zone will feature nature-based play.

Member Mignardi asked about the programming for the teen zone.

Member Wiley said it is envisioned as an artistic space with swings designed to encourage socializing.

Member Woodson said the pop-up market could serve as an important food source in the neighborhood but that trash cans should be covered.

Vice Chair Clarke asked if there were any plans for natural shade with larger trees.

Applicant Wiley stated that tree canopy is very important and one of the least expensive things to implement.

Chair Quilici asked about the project phasing.

Applicant Wiley said the park master plan is not currently funded but that, as part of the greater Jackson Ward plan, there is an early action activity that will be funded. The splash pad was identified as this action activity and is an opportunity to implement an early part of the design. He believes the project can be completed in two phases.

Chair Quilici expressed concern about the lack of street crossing into the primary entrance of the space. He also suggested that there be a natural shade buffer between the playground and adjacent parking space.

Applicant Wiley said a reconsideration of the streetscape and having urban street trees inside of the park space could benefit the design.

Maritza Pechin, Deputy Director of the Office of Equitable Development, spoke about the Calhoun Center renovation plans. The property is currently owned by RRHA and being transferred to the City. The renovated center will be opened by 2025. She noted that existing features like the community garden and basketball courts will stay in place so funding dollars can be stretched the farthest with future amenities.

Chair Quilici opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

A motion was made by Committee Member Woodson, seconded by Vice Chair Clarke (?), to approve the application with the following recommendations:

1. Street crosswalks be shifted to connect with the park entryway;
2. Trees be installed as a buffer between the playground and adjacent parking space.

A motion was made by Committee Member Woodson, seconded by Clarke, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be approved with conditions. The motion carried by the following vote:

Recommended Conditions:

1. Staff recommends that final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant.
2. Staff recommends inclusion of sustainable considerations such as stormwater retention and permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.
3. Staff recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible.
4. Staff recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to include landscaping, sustainability features, and public spaces.
5. Staff recommends that a specific maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase regarding the splash pad that details future maintenance funding and anticipated life cycle of the mechanical equipment.
6. Applicant to reassess the entrance and street crossing arrangement to align with pedestrian network on both sides of Calhoun Street, for the final submission.
7. Maintain existing trees and provide further trees between the existing parking area and play area as well as along the road frontage nearest the parking area, where possible, for the final submission.

The motion carried by the following vote:

OTHER BUSINESS

11. Amend the Application Form to remove the requirement for physical copies of application materials.

Attachments: Current UDC Application
Current UDC Application - Markup
Proposed UDC Application - Markup

Planner Revilla handed out flyers and invited Committee Members to the upcoming Jackson Ward neighborhood workshop.

Planner Roakes shared a proposed amendment to the application form to remove the requirement for physical copies of application materials.

Member Gemmer said the copy on the application form shall read that the images be "scaled" at 11 x 17 instead of "printed."

Adjournment