



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: September 4, 2018
RE: **Conceptual location, character, and extent review of a restroom facility as part of the Intermediate Terminal Dock site, 3101 Wharf Street; UDC 2018-30**

I. APPLICANT

Don Summers, Department of Public Works, Division of Capital Projects

II. LOCATION

3101 Wharf St.

Property Owner:

CITY OF RICHMOND PUBLIC WORKS

III. PURPOSE

The application is for conceptual location, character, and extent review of a self-contained, pre-cast concrete restroom facility within the footprint of the existing Intermediate Terminal Dock site, 3101 Wharf Street, as part of the Downriver segment of the Riverfront Plan.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This project seeks to increase public pedestrian amenities in anticipation of the growing popularity and use of the Virginia Capital Trail and the future opportunity for commercial passenger activity along this area of the riverfront. Currently, the area is devoid of any public restrooms. As one of two parts of the Intermediate Terminal Dock Phase 2 – Public Access project, this plan proposes to install a pre-cast concrete restroom facility within the footprint of the existing Intermediate Terminal Dock site.

The proposed restroom would consist of a Men's and Women's restroom, each containing two stalls and one sink. Additionally, the facility will provide a water fountain for public use. This facility would operate during normal hours as established by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

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

- That the use of plant materials on the facility (i.e. trellises, vertical gardens) be considered to further blend the facility into its surroundings and reduce any environmental impact
- That a landscaping plan be developed that enhances the surrounding area with shade
- That furnishings be provided to further enhance the pedestrian realm and to promote activity and interaction with the surrounding uses

Staff Contact:

Josh Son // (804) 646-3741 // joshua.son@richmondgov.com

V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The site is bordered by the Virginia Capital Trail, paralleling Wharf Street to the east, the James River to the west, the Intermediate Terminal building and a former concrete pad to the north, and a boathouse for local colleges to the south.

The proposed project area is located within the footprint of the existing Intermediate terminal Dock Site. Adjacent to the proposed project area is the site of the former concrete pad, unofficially known as the Sugar Pad. The site remains a popular fishing area and is an overall popular gathering space for the community.

The area to the north is planned to be redeveloped into a Stone Brewing World Bistro and Gardens in the near future. Rail lines once part of the Capital Trail have been vacated.

b. Scope of Review

This project is reviewed under Section 17.07 for location, character, and extent as a public building or structure.

c. Project Description

Intermediate Terminal is the primary opportunity for the City, along the James River, to develop commercial passenger, tourist and City resident interaction with the deep water portions of the river. The Riverfront Plan highlighted the Intermediate Terminal Dock area as one that provides the citizens of the City of Richmond a place to enjoy the James River through boating, fishing and other activities. There are currently no public restroom facilities anywhere along this area of the riverfront. In addition, there are no public restroom facilities provided for anyone utilizing the Capital Trail in this area.

As part of the proposed “Intermediate Terminal Dock Phase 2 – Public Access” project, the city is proposing to install a pre-cast concrete restroom facility within the footprint of the existing Intermediate Terminal Dock site. This restroom facility will serve individuals coming to the dock for passenger cruise ship departures and for those utilizing the Capital Trail and the dock area for recreational purposes.

The city proposes to install a self-contained, pre-cast concrete restroom facility within the footprint of the existing Intermediate Terminal Dock site. The proposed restroom will measure, approximately, 12 ft x 22 ft and consist of a Men’s and Women’s restroom facility. Each facility will contain 2 stalls and 1 sink.

Additionally the facility will provide a water fountain for public use. The restroom facilities are proposed to be open during the normal operating hours established by the City’s Parks and Recreation department.

The current budget for this project is set at \$81,849. This funding was applied for and received via the “VPA aid to Local Ports” grant program.

The proposed start date for this Phase of the project is September, 2018. The project must be underway by December, 2018 in order to qualify for the use of the VPA to Local Port grant program.

d. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to find any existing records related to projects involving this area of the capital trail.

e. Master Plan

The Richmond Riverfront Plan, adopted by Richmond City Council in November 2012 as a part of the City's Master Plan and Downtown Plan, is the City's vision document for the Riverfront. A 2017 amendment to the plan designates all projects contained within the downriver area, from Great Shiplock Park east to the border with Henrico County, as Priority 1, allowing planning, design, and construction to proceed simultaneously.

According to the plan, the downriver end of the study area encompasses everything between Pear Street and Rocketts Landing, from Dock and Wharf Streets to the river. All downriver parcels should actively improve and engage the Riverfront. They should incorporate passive and active Riverfront recreation opportunities, including a variety of docks and watercraft launches that take advantage of the adjacent navigable channel and flat water. Terraces at Lehigh and Intermediate dock should provide direct access down to the river's edge.

Intermediate Wharf is specifically called out in the plan: The Intermediate Wharf, a City-owned parcel, fronts the James River with three distinct bulkhead structures. The elevated paved slab (which has since been leveled) has been used as a multi-purpose platform for various events, including the Tall Ships Festival. Future upgrades to this area may include a timber wharf edge for large ocean-going water craft berthing.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Environment section of the Urban Design Guidelines state that "impacts to the natural landscape should be assessed and should generally be minimized when constructing man-made elements. 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" (page 9). The guidelines mention that "plant materials should create spaces by providing walls and canopies in outdoor areas" in terms of landscaping. (page 10).

Under the Storm Water Management and Low Impact Development section, the guidelines note that "site development should take measures towards conservation of natural resources. Where feasible, developments should also promote impact minimization techniques through alternative storm water management practices" (page 11). The Guidelines express support for low-impact development, the goal of which is to "mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source" (page 11).

The Public Facilities section of the Urban Design Guidelines contains relevant suggestions on sustainable practices when it comes to public facilities. "Green building practices, which minimize the environmental impact of buildings both in the construction phase and throughout the life of the building, should be considered in the construction of new public facilities as well as in the adaptation

of existing public facilities. In general, public facilities should be designed to promote street activity and interaction with surrounding uses.” (page 13).

The Community Character section of the Urban Design Guidelines notes “site furnishings should be conveniently located for the pedestrian, but should not obstruct pedestrian circulation. 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. 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.” (page 25).

VII. ATTACHMENTS

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