



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: September 5, 2017
RE: **Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent review of I-95 ramps at Maury St. at E. 4th St. and Maury St.; UDC No. 2017-31**

I. APPLICANT

Manouchehr Nosrati, Department of Public Works

II. LOCATION

The intersection of Maury St. and E. 4th St.

Property Owner:

CITY OF RICHMOND

III. PURPOSE

The application is for conceptual location, character and extent review of a roundabout at the intersection of E. 4th Street and Maury St.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds the implementation of a roundabout at Maury Street and E. 4th Street will generally improve the intersection. It will decrease the amount of vehicles that queue along the off-ramp simultaneously allowing larger vehicles to more easily move through the intersection. The plan generally addresses pedestrian programming through adding sidewalks, removing unnecessary aprons, and further provides enhanced accessibility at grade changes.

Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends the Planning Commission approve the conceptual design with the following recommendations for final review:

- That the final plans include a landscaping plan and schedule showing plant species, quantity, location and size at the time of installation
- That the landscaping plan seeks to utilize native, non-invasive species where possible
- That the landscaping plan seeks to beautify the roundabout as well as enhance the pedestrian amenities around it
- That the final plans include a pedestrian plan that includes, but is not limited, to both existing and proposed new sidewalks, ADA ramps, crosswalks, and bike lanes that are within the scope of this project, including dimensions
- That the applicant further consider ways that this project may positively impact, and tie into, future pedestrian infrastructure in the surrounding community

Furthermore, the Urban Design Committee recommends the Planning Commission approve the conceptual design with the following condition for final review:

- That the applicant include lighting and consider how the Manchester lighting plan may be incorporated

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The area surrounding the subject intersection is predominantly in an industrial area, surrounded by warehouses, utility tanks, vacant lots, and other industrial uses. The proposed project areas straddles the line between an area zoned M-2 and an area zoned B-7.

The off-ramp carries many large semi-trucks and other vehicles onto either direction on Maury Street and allows access into the Manchester community and major industrial corridors such as Jefferson Davis Highway and Commerce Road to the south or to Brander Street to the north.

The on-ramp allows vehicles to enter only from E. 4th Street, from either direction, to access either north or south bound I-95.

Maury Street currently exists as a two-way street with one lane in each direction.

E. 4th Street is a one-way, two lane street that directs traffic south toward Maury Street. On the south side of Maury Street, E. 4th Street becomes a two-way street, with one lane in each direction, with the exception of a turn lane to the on-ramp.

b. Scope of Review

The proposed roundabout is subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter as a “widening, extension, narrowing, enlargement, vacation or change of use of streets”.

c. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to identify any prior projects involving this intersection.

d. Project Description

This project will provide an enhanced gateway to the Manchester Industrial District for all users. The construction of a single lane roundabout on Maury Street will eliminate two traffic signals (i.e., at East 4th Street and at I-95 Off-Ramp) and will significantly reduce the vehicles that queue during peak hours on the I-95 Off-Ramp. This project will require both right of way acquisitions as well as utility relocations.

e. Master Plan

The subject intersection is located in the Old South Planning District, as defined by the citywide Master Plan, which designates the surrounding area for Industrial uses. The Plan specifically recommends the intersection needs improvement by suggesting that “the reconfiguration of the I-95/Maury Street off-ramp to 4th Street with emphasis on protecting the surrounding residential neighborhoods” (page 284).

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Guidelines note that “intersections should be designed to serve pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists in a safe manner” and that “roundabouts should be considered in certain situations as an alternative to the traditional intersection” (page 7). The Guidelines are supportive of traffic management techniques that slow traffic (page 7) and that add “an aesthetic contribution to the urban character of the neighborhoods in which they are placed” (page 8). In regards to landscaping, the Guidelines note that “landscaping should provide a sense of scale and seasonal interest” and that “shade trees for pedestrian comfort should be the predominant plant material in an urban setting” (page 10).

VI. ATTACHMENTS

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