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To: Urban Design Committee  
From: Planning and Preservation Division  
Date: October 4, 2018  
RE: **Final review of streetscape encroachments and improvements for The Sauer Center, 2000 W. Marshall Street and 840 Hermitage Road; UDC 2018-39**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Ricky Gorrell, HG Design Studio representing Sauer Properties, Inc.

**II. LOCATION**

The streetscape public right-of-way along 2000-2220 W. Broad Street

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond right-of-way; Sauer Properties, Inc. will retain ownership of the improvements

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for the final review of streetscape encroachments and improvements into the City right-of-way

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

Staff finds that the project does a commendable job of improving this section of streetscape while maintaining a balance of existing and new landscaping while maintaining effective sidewalk width. The use of hardscape materials to denote building entrances and tree wells further illustrate the thoughtful consideration that went into the design and provide visual interest and overall enhancement of the public realm.

Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Director of Public Works grant approval of the encroachment request.

**Staff Contact:**

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**V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

**a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

The subject right-of-way (ROW) is located along 2000 W. Marshall Street and 840 Hermitage Road. The ROW spans an area currently zoned M-1, Light Industrial. The site is bordered on the east by Hermitage Road which consists of a five lane road. Abutting the subject ROW are two south bound traffic lanes and a turn lane, with a posted speed limit of 35 mph; adjacent to the turn lane is a median; followed by two north bound traffic lanes with a similar posted speed limit of 35 mph. The eastern side of Hermitage Road currently is the site of a mix of industrial buildings, a parking lot, and grass. Farther to the south is the dense, walkable, Fan neighborhood, located about 700 ft. away.

The Sauer Center borders the subject ROW to the west, more specifically, the headquarters office for the CF Sauer Company (under renovation), Wholefoods

Market (under construction), off-street parking for the center, and future parcels for development.

**b. Scope of Review**

The City owns the ROW, but Sauer Properties, Inc. will perform all of the work and will be responsible for all of the maintenance, which puts the improvements in the category of encroachments.

The project encroachments include: sidewalk, handicap ramps, and pedestrian street crossings. The encroachment process is administered through the Department of Public Works, which has requested that the Urban Design Committee (UDC) provide design advice on certain types of encroachments. The UDC does not have the authority to approve encroachments, but rather provides advice to the Department of Public Works.

**c. Project Description**

With redevelopment of the 20-acre portion of The Sauer Center site, located on the north side of Hermitage Road between West Broad Street and City Fire Station No. 10, the sidewalk north of Hermitage Road needed a new functional design to encourage pedestrian activity and upgrade the streetscape appeal related to the development. With no street trees on the north side of the road, and many obsolete vehicular entrances running across the existing sidewalk, redesign of the streetscape was critical to reflect the first-class development intentions of The Sauer Center. The streetscape design will be the front door to The Sauer Center for patrons coming from Richmond's north side community, creating the first visual impression of this special development. This development hopes to draw new pedestrian and bicycling activity. For those reasons the design makes use of quality materials such as brick at important pedestrian intersections on this portion of the City sidewalk in combination with scored natural gray concrete to create visual interest.

Sustainable items incorporated into the streetscape design include larger than usual 6'x18' tree wells. The large tree wells are designed to provide more space for tree root development, hence providing for the longevity of the street trees. Electric car charging stations and solar panels (extensively used on roof tops and carports) are planned within The Sauer Center site outside of the right of way.

LED in-ground up-lights in the concrete sidewalk are being used to light the building façade of The C.F. Sauer Company. Ground mounted bullet type Up-Lights hidden in shrub beds outside the right of way are being used to light the facades of the Virginia School Supply Building and the 840 Hermitage Building. The intent is to accentuate the development at night as will be done on the West Broad Street frontage of the development, in the same fashion as the illumination of buildings on Main Street in the Fan district between Morris and Harvie Streets by the developer in the last part of the 20th century.

**d. UDC Review History**

At the regular September 2018 meeting, the UDC recommended that the Director of Public Works grant approval of the encroachment request with the following condition:

- A professional Arborist review the existing oak tree and advise on the lifespan and the long range success of the tree remaining alive, post construction

**e. Master Plan**

This project falls within the Near West District of the Master Plan. It mentions expected changes and trends will occur specifically on major transportation and commercial corridors, particularly Broad Street, where there will be more of a focus on retailing and commercial services (page 228).

Regarding W. Broad St. corridor between Belvidere St. and Boulevard, the plan further states that “Community commercial, institutional, governmental, and office uses are all appropriate and should continue. Vacant buildings on the corridor should be encouraged to develop first floor commercial uses with office and/or residential uses for upper floors. Ideally, Broad Street should be a dense urban development that is oriented to the pedestrian and compatible with adjacent residential development. Therefore, any new development along this section of Broad Street needs to be oriented to the street with no setbacks, and to complement the prevailing urban storefront character. Additional off-street parking should be developed with minimal visual impact on the corridor. Vehicle-oriented land uses and driveways that could impede the flow of pedestrian traffic should be discouraged. Existing auto-related...uses should be gradually phased out along the corridor.” (page 239).

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Community Character section of the Urban Design Guidelines contains several suggestions on landscaping, noting that “generally, new street trees should be located a minimum of 35’ from each other and three feet from the curb” and that “generally, a street tree should be no closer than 12 feet from a streetlight” (page 21). “Entrances and pedestrian walkways should enhance the streetscape and delineate an edge between pedestrian walkways and the street. Appropriate landscaping should be used to clearly define entrances and pedestrian walkways” (page 20).

“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).

The Guidelines also encourage alternatives to metal tree grates, unless a precedent has been established in the area (page 21). Finally, the Guidelines state that lighting and street fixtures should be consistent with the existing fixtures in the surrounding area and that pedestrian light poles should be placed 40 to 60 feet apart (page 22, 25).

Regarding door swings, the Guidelines state “The Urban Design Committee does not support the encroachment of door swings into the public right-of-way. Recessed entries are encouraged. When a recessed entry is not feasible, the

encroachment of the door swing into the public right-of-way should be minimized as much as possible.” (page 28).

The Guidelines have this to say about outdoor dining “Outdoor dining facilities that encroach into the public right-of-way should only be considered when there is adequate sidewalk width to accommodate both the dining facilities and the pedestrian” (page 29). Also, “the outdoor dining furnishings should reflect the character of the restaurant while respecting the spirit of the street design.” (29).

## **VII. ATTACHMENTS**

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