



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: January 22, 2019
RE: **Final Location, Character and Extent review of Pump House Parking Lot Trail, 1704 Pump House Drive; UDC 2019-04**

I. APPLICANTS

Michael Burton, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

II. LOCATION

1704 Pump House Drive

Property Owner:

The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities and the Richmond Metropolitan Authority

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final location, character and extent review of improvements to existing trail networks between Pump House Drive and Park Drive at the Boulevard Bridge.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This improvement plan for the Pump House Parking Lot Trail will enhance the City of Richmond's Riverfront trail network by connecting trails between Pump House Drive and Park Drive at the north end of the Boulevard Bridge. Pedestrians and bikers will benefit from the improvements, which propose replacing the existing foot path in this location with a 530-foot-long asphalt trail. New trees will be planted to replace non-invasive tree species removed on city property, and a bioretention basin with additional native plantings will improve the visual aesthetic of the trail and aid in effective stormwater drainage. Staff finds that the proposed improvements are consistent with the recommendations of the Master Plan and the Urban Design Guidelines.

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

- If any existing cobblestone or granite is removed, it be stockpiled or reused
- The applicant consider using pervious pavement materials where possible
- The applicant further study the western end of the trail connection to provide better pedestrian and cycling access to Pump House Drive

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The site consists of a parking lot, made of asphalt and gravel, to the southwest; a toll road to the east; and Byrd Park to north. The site, within the R-2 (single-

family residential) zone, spans the length of the parking lot and connects existing trail networks between Pump House Drive and the Boulevard Bridge. Pedestrians and cyclists use a footpath on site to move between the parking lot and Park Drive. The trail crosses property owned by both the Department of Public Utilities and the Richmond Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

b. Scope of Review

The improvements associated with this project are subject to location, character, and extent review as a “park or other public way” in accordance with Section 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter.

c. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to identify any similar projects or prior projects involving this property.

d. Project Description

The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (DPRCF) plans to construct a 530-foot-long, 8-foot wide asphalt trail to connect existing trail networks between Pump House Drive and Park Drive at the north end of the Boulevard Bridge. Currently, pedestrians and cyclists use a footpath that exists on the site to move between the parking lot and Park Drive. This trail will be dimensioned for two-way traffic flow and will serve both cyclists and pedestrians accessing the Pump House Park, Byrd Park, and the North Bank Trail. The trail will also be designed to Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) “shared used path” standards and to Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Standards for trails to provide an accessible pathway. (The more northern of the two spurs connecting to the sidewalk along Pump House Drive is not graded to accessible standards.)

The trail connector will be bordered by locally-sourced granite boulders (some already stockpiled at the site) to form a traffic barrier through the Pump House Parking Lot, and it will be furnished with repurposed concrete blocks (from the site). The stormwater management plan includes a swale that roughly parallels the length of the trail and will conduit water to a bioretention basin (level 2) adjacent to the trail at its western end. This stormwater Best Management Practice (BMP) will be planted and will be visible from Pump House Drive. Existing signs will be resituated with the new design; additional trail-related signage will be added by DPRCF as needed using their standard signage program.

The trail crosses property owned by the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) that is currently used for the parking lot and trailhead for the North Bank Trail, as well as property owned by the Richmond Metropolitan Transportation Authority (RMTA) along Park Drive south of the toll plaza. The project has been permitted with RMTA.

The project budget is \$124,634.40, which includes the following:

- Environmental and cultural resource studies needed for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) compliance (given the federal funding)

- Submission of an application and design exhibits to the City’s Urban Design Committee (UDC) and the Planning Commission and assistance with the approval process of these two bodies
- Submission of applications and design drawings to the City’s Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and assistance with the permitting process
- Construction administration of the project
- Construction of an eight-foot wide asphalt trail, bioretention facility, and associated landscaping and site amenities

The project is being funded through a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant award. The RTP is a federally-funded program 80-20 matching reimbursement program administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). DPRCF is sourcing the 20% match (20% of the project total budget or \$24,926.80) from the City’s major Parks fund. The remainder of the budget is funded through the grant reward. DPRCF is working closely with DCR staff on the grant reporting requirements to track the project’s progress and secure reimbursement.

e. Master Plan

The park is located in the Near West Planning District, as defined by the citywide Master Plan. The Plan places the subject area in the Public and Open Space use category, with primary uses including publicly owned and operated parks, recreation areas, open spaces, schools, libraries and other government facilities (page 231).

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Public Park section of the Urban Design Guidelines notes that “public parks are integral to the quality of life found in any urban landscape. Parks should respond to the environment in which they are located and should be designed in accordance with their intended use” (page 9).

Additionally, “A preference should be given towards materials and construction techniques which improve energy efficiency and water/soil quality” (page 9). The Guidelines are also very supportive of low-impact development and green building practices (page 10, 11).

The Guidelines note that landscape plans should “include diverse plant species, including evergreen, flowering and shade tree species combined with shrubs, ground covers and annual and perennial plantings” and that “shade trees for pedestrian comfort should be the predominant plant material in an urban setting” (page 10).

Lastly, the Guidelines state that “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).

VII. ATTACHMENTS

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