



To: Urban Design Committee
From: Planning and Preservation Division
Date: October 9, 2014
RE: **Conceptual Location, Character and Extent review of the Richmond Police Department K-9 facility; UDC No. 2014-34**

I. APPLICANT

Lacy Salomone, Department of Public Works

II. LOCATION

500 Forest Lawn Drive (Pine Camp)

Property Owners:

City of Richmond

III. PURPOSE

The application is for conceptual location, character and extent review of the Richmond Police Department K-9 facility at 500 Forest Lawn Drive.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This is a request to replace the existing Richmond Police Department (RPD) K-9 facility with a new building, to contain offices and a kennel area. The applicant's report notes that the current facility needs replacement due to significant operational deficiencies and substantial ongoing facility maintenance problems. The new facility will be built within the existing RPD K-9 complex, adjacent to the existing office building. Upon completion of the new facility, the existing office building and kennel area will be demolished and the site restored.

Staff is supportive of providing a new facility for the Richmond Police Department K-9 division. Staff notes that the building is being constructed in an area that will rarely be visited by the citizenry, and finds the proposal to be generally consistent with the recommendations of the Urban Design Guidelines, but also finds in the Guidelines pertinent recommendations regarding how the "design and condition of all public facilities sets the image of the City".

To that end, it would be Staff's preference that the main entrance be made more visible. As currently designed, the main entrance to the building sits recessed from the training room, with the front door squeezed against the training room exterior wall. Pulling the entrance forward so that it sits flush with the training room exterior wall, combined with a slightly longer overhang, can help make the entrance more visible. Staff would also prefer to see the windows in the north façade of the administrative building match the size of the window in the Sergeant's office. Doing so would allow for more light into the office area, would provide views outside for those sitting at desks, and on the exterior would help break up the horizontal expanse of corrugated siding. Lastly, Staff would recommend that the proposed plain concrete block exterior walls for the kennel area be composed of split-faced concrete block instead. This building material provides more texture and visual interest than standard concrete block. Therefore, it is Staff's position

that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval, with the following conditions:

- That the applicant receives approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals to locate on the site prior to final review.
- That the applicant modifies the building design to make the front entrance more prominent.
- That the applicant replaces the standard concrete block walls in the kennel portion of the building with split-faced block.
- That the final plans include color elevation renderings.
- That the final plans include building material samples, or pictures showing the proposed building materials.
- That the final plans provide a landscape plan, to include plant species, location, quantity, and size at the time of installation.
- That the final plans provide details on the proposed parking lot lighting, to include pole and fixture model, height, color, finish and light source.

Staff Contact:

Jeff Eastman, (804) 646-6348

V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The subject property is located at the intersection of Old Brook Road and Azalea Avenue and is zoned R-5 (Single-family residential). The public face of the property is the City's Pine Camp Arts and Community Center, however, the heavily wooded 103.8 acre property extends southward behind the Henderson Sports Complex and is also home to several City storage buildings and yards, the existing Police Department (RPD) K-9 facility, a K-9 training area, and the Northside dog park. The existing K-9 facility is a concrete block building dating to 1965.

The northern and eastern property lines are also the border between the City and the County of Henrico. The area of Henrico County to the north is developed with single-family residential uses, while the area to the east contains the Forest Lawn Cemetery. At the southern tip of the subject property is the City's Washington Park neighborhood, also zoned R-5 and developed with single-family detached dwellings. To the west of the subject property are the City's John Marshall High School and Henderson Middle School.

b. Scope of Review

The project is subject to location, character, and extent review as a "public building" under Section 17.07 of the City Charter.

c. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to identify any prior projects on the subject property that were not related to Pine Camp.

d. Project Description

This is a request to replace the existing Richmond Police Department (RPD) K-9 facility with a new building, to contain offices and a kennel area. The applicant's report notes that the current facility needs replacement due to significant operational deficiencies and substantial ongoing facility maintenance problems.

The new facility will be built within the existing RPD K-9 complex, adjacent to the existing office building. Upon completion of the new facility, the existing office building and kennel area will be demolished and the site restored.

The new 5,000 square feet K-9 facility will have an administrative area and a kennel area, separated by a breezeway. The administrative area will provide office and training spaces for the twelve RPD K-9 officers in addition to an exercise room and locker rooms. The training classroom will also be used for regional K-9 training, where officers from other localities come for instruction.

The kennel area will be located at the rear of the new facility; providing kennels, food storage, a canine examination/cleaning room, and an equipment storage room. There are 10 kennels interior to the building, which connect to another 10 kennels which are exterior but protected by a roof. These exterior kennels in turn connect to a fenced-in dog run. The RPD K-9 dogs typically reside with their handlers, but they are occasionally boarded overnight. Most nights these kennels will be vacant.

The exterior materials on the administrative portion of the building include an aluminum storefront door and sidelights alongside corrugated metal panel siding and board-and-batten cementitious siding. The kennel wing exterior material is composed of concrete block. Windows are provided in the administrative wings in the office/training areas, and there will be a row of upper-level windows composed of polycarbonate panels in the kennel area. The interior kennel is climate controlled. The building is capped by a low-slope membrane roof that overhangs the building by about 2'.

Access to the site will be provided by an extension to the existing asphalt drive. A twenty-one space parking lot is located to the east of the building, between the training field and the obstacle course. Two bioretention ponds are proposed – one to the west of the building and one to the west of the parking area. The plans also call for the relocation of the existing K-9 memorial.

The project is funded through the City of Richmond's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget and a grant through the Virginia Office of the Attorney General. The CIP Budget provides \$200,000 across fiscal years 2014 and 2015 for design of the new facility, and the state grant provides \$1,184,177 for the construction of the new facility. Construction is slated to begin in February 2015, and the facility is expected to open before December 31, 2015.

e. Master Plan

The subject corridor is located within the North Planning District as defined by the citywide Master Plan, which recommends Public and Open Space uses for the subject property, a designation that includes publicly owned and operated parks, recreation areas, open spaces and other government and public service facilities (page 135). There is no language in the Plan specific to the subject property or the proposed improvements.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

In general, the Urban Design Guidelines note that “the quality, design, and condition of all public facilities sets the image of the City, and sends a message about the values placed upon the services provided” (page 13). More specifically,

the Guidelines state that “a building's entrance should be easily recognizable (page 13). The Guidelines also note that building materials “should be appropriate for the size and architectural style of the building” and that “many different materials on a single building lead to visual confusion and should be avoided” (page 17). Building materials should also be “aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require little maintenance” (page 17).

The subsection on materials continues to say that “building textures and their combinations should add continuity and not conflict or detract from each other” and that “textures should be appropriate for the size, proportion and architectural style of the building and its surroundings” (page 17). Referring to building colors, that Guidelines note that they “should be coordinated and compatible with each other and with adjacent buildings” (page 17). The Guidelines also state that “windows, projecting cornices, and architectural details, such as decorative masonry bands in an accent color, may be used to break up flat building planes” (page 19).

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).

VII. ATTACHMENTS

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