



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: August 17th, 2020
RE: **Final location, character, and extent review of Warwick Road Maintenance Facility Improvements; 6120 Warwick Road; UDC 2020-12**

I. APPLICANT

Louis Goode, City of Richmond Special Capital Projects

II. LOCATION

1620 Warwick Road

Property Owner:

City of Richmond Department of Public Works

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final approval of improvements to the Warwick Road Maintenance Facility including new parking spaces, lay-down yard, driveway, landscaping, and canopy structure.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The Warwick Maintenance Facility's lay-down yard is losing space that currently houses and stores city maintenance vehicles and equipment due to the construction of a new telecommunications tower. The site improvements proposed with this project would create a secured lay-down yard in a currently unused space.

The deteriorated driveway through the site will be repaved, including parking spots in front of the maintenance building. New gravel parking spots will be created on the south and east sides of the driveway, and be contained by new curbing and a metal edge restraint. The new lay-down yard will be screened using a combination of fencing and large trees, as well as large and small evergreen shrubs.

Therefore the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the final design with the following recommendations:

- Applicant consider pervious paving materials for the parking spaces in front of the maintenance building.
- The new fencing installed as screening around the new lay-down yard be wooden and stained a neutral color.
- Larger shade trees proposed in the landscape plan be prioritized on the west and south side of the new lay-down yard to further enhance screening from Warwick Road.
- For gravel parking spaces, if grade allows, applicant consider setting first layer of gravel in a stabilizing grid to further protect the gravel from being washed away.
- Applicant consider the feasibility of locating the new canopy structure to the northeastern portion of the lay-down yard, away from Warwick Road, so that it may be less visible from the main road.

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The site is located at 6120 Warwick Road and is zoned R-3 Residential (Single-Family), located on 4.06 acres. The site consists of Fire Station #23, a maintenance office building, and a lay-down yard for maintenance equipment.

A new communications tower, which was reviewed by the Urban Design Committee and approved by the Planning Commission in 2016, is being constructed on site.

b. Scope of Review

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

c. UDC Review History

UDC 2016-52; A new public communication facility at Fire Station #23 underwent final location, character, and extent review by the Urban Design Committee at the regular December 2016 meeting. The Urban Design Committee recommended that the Planning Commission grant final approval of the plan as submitted. Subsequently, the Planning Commission approved the application at their regular December 2016 meeting with the Urban Design Committee’s recommendation.

d. Project Description

A new telecommunications tower is being constructed in the existing maintenance facility's lay-down yard located at the corner of Warwick Road and Labrook Concourse, behind Fire Station #23. This tower is one of several that is part of a regional initiative to improve the communications and connectivity between the citizens and the locality’s emergency systems. Consequently, the current maintenance facility’s lay-down yard is losing space that currently houses and stores city maintenance vehicles and equipment. The site improvements proposed with this project would create a secured lay-down yard in currently unused space.

The City of Richmond has contracted with Timmons Group to handle the design and construction oversight of the maintenance facility’s improvements. The project consists of constructing a new parking lot, creating a secured lay-down yard for facility equipment and vehicles, and improving entrance driveways. A tree survey and condition assessment have been performed to document the overall integrity of the on-site trees. The maintenance staff have reviewed the project in detail and support the improvements being proposed with this project.

Demolition and removal of the existing driveway will be done at the outset. Minimal tree clearing will be necessary with this project and only five trees are planned for removal, with strict preservation measures in place for the remaining trees to be preserved in proximity to construction activity. To offset removal of these five trees, the landscape plan proposes a replacement ratio of at least 1:1 for diameter at breast height of removed tree and diameter at breast height of

replacement trees. Power will be routed to all site lighting. The plan calls for the construction of a canopy structure that will protect maintenance equipment from the elements. The canopy structure will be 50 feet in length and 20 feet in width. It will be open air in design and constructed of wood, with a minimum height of eight feet. The lay-down yard will be surrounded by fencing with a minimum height of eight feet, paired with landscaping per City ordinances to provide enough screening from the adjacent thoroughfare, Warwick Road. The specific equipment / vehicles proposed to be stored in the new lay-down yard are:

- Four (4) crew cab trucks,
- Three (3) 12' trailers,
- One (1) 18' trailer,
- One (1) 12' tractor with batwings,
- Two (2) 18' tractors with batwings,
- One (1) tractor with frontend bucket, and
- Five to six (5-6) snow plows and spreaders.

Storm water management will be handled via underground pipe detention as to limit the above-ground footprint and not take up needed real estate. The site parking program, fifty (50) total spaces, will provide the adequate number of spaces necessary to accommodate the number of employees (44 employee spaces, 3 ADA spaces, 3 visitor spaces) on a given shift. Parking spaces on the south side of the maintenance building are proposed to be asphalt, while the parking spaces on the south and east sides of the drive way will be gravel.

Construction could start as early as January of next year for the facility if funding is awarded.

e. Master Plan

The project site is located in the Midlothian Planning District, which is identified by the City of Richmond's current Master Plan. Although the Warwick Road Maintenance Facility is not specifically mentioned in the Master Plan, the plan does mention the continued growth of the district through different housing opportunity areas and large developments, calling for an improvement in infrastructure. An updated maintenance facility with proper amenities and storage for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of existing and future infrastructure is necessary.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines state that "impervious pavement should be minimized on a site to limit storm water runoff and heat gain" (pg. 3). Parking areas on the south and east sides of the site's main driveway will utilize gravel parking spaces instead of asphalt.

The Guidelines emphasize that, "pervious pavement materials should be used whenever possible for parking areas" (pg. 4). There are opportunities within the scope of this project to implement pervious paving materials, such as the parking spots in front of the maintenance building that are currently being proposed as asphalt.

Regarding existing trees, the Urban Design Guidelines note that "Significant healthy trees should be preserved and maintained" (pg.10). The project team has completed a tree survey and will be preserving as many healthy trees as

possible, with the exception of five trees that will be impacted by construction. Any trees that are removed will be replaced.

The Urban Design Guidelines state that, “all trash receptacles, dumpsters, fuel tanks and significant building mechanical equipment on the exterior of a building should be screened” (pg. 25). The trash receptacle onsite is currently screened and will remain screened. “Evergreen tree and/or shrub plantings should be located adjacent to walls and fences to strengthen their screening ability. Evergreen trees and /or shrubs should also be placed adjacent to large screening enclosures to improve their appearance” (pg. 26). Large trees, as well as large and small evergreen shrubs, are being proposed along all new fencing around the new lay-down yard, adding additional screening from Warwick Road.

The material of the new fencing being installed around the new lay-down yard has yet to be selected. Regarding fencing, the Urban Design Guideline’s state that, “In most instances, chain link fencing is not an appropriate fencing material. If chain link fencing is required, however, for safety or security purposes, the entire structure should be coated with a dark colored vinyl, preferably black, and be supplemented with sufficient evergreen landscaping” (pg. 26).

The Urban Design Guidelines state that, “Facilities required for the ongoing operation of the building, such as loading docks, maintenance sheds, or HVAC equipment” should be screened from view or located in the rear” (pg. 14). The new canopy structure for the storage and protection of maintenance equipment will be screened by fencing and landscaping.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

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