



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: May 21, 2018
RE: **Final Location, Character, and Extent review of 29th Street Shared Use Path, 714 N. 30th St.; UDC 2018-19**

I. APPLICANT

Jian Xu, Department of Public Works, Transportation Engineering Division

II. LOCATION

714 N. 30th St.

Property Owner:

CITY OF RICHMOND PUBLIC UTILITIES

III. PURPOSE

The application is for the final location, character, and extent review of the development of a shared use path for pedestrian and bicycle use from the intersection of 29th St. and M St. to the intersection of 29th St. and N St.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that this proposal for a new shared path for a pedestrian and bicyclist connection on 29th Street from N Street to M Street will increase connectivity and will enhance the adjoining open space. As part of the larger 29th Street Bike Walk Boulevard project, this shared path will assist in the creation of a more safe and accessible urban corridor.

Although landscaping is not part of the scope of this project, there is potential opportunity for grant funding which may address landscape improvements, at which point the Urban Design Committee will be notified for formal review. Staff is supportive of the proposed final design for the new shared path.

Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the final design as presented.

Staff Contact:

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The proposed project is located in the Church Hill North City Old & Historic District. The site spans the width of one city block with N Street to the north, M Street to the south, a city-owned water tower to the east, and basketball and tennis courts to the west, associated with George Mason Elementary School to the north. It is located in an area zoned R-6. Suburban-style single-family detached homes border the northern entrance while more urban-style single-family homes border the southern entrance. The western side of the southern

half of the trail that abuts the tennis courts is aligned with mature trees. The southern side of the tennis courts that front M Street contain a well-maintained bed of landscaping.

The site to the east houses a newly constructed water tower, owned by the Department of Public Utilities. The perimeter is delineated by black metal fencing with trees planted only along the northern and western side.

b. Scope of Review

The project is subject to location, character, and extent review as part of a “public way” under Section 17.07 of the City Charter.

c. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to find any existing records related to projects involving this site.

d. Project Description

The purpose of this project is to construct a shared use path for pedestrian and bicyclist use from the intersection of 29th Street / M Street to 29th Street / N Street. The path is 330 feet in length, or approximately one City block. The path will be located on property / right-of-way currently owned by City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities. The existing path area is grass, flat in grade, and is bounded by the intersection of 29th Street / N Street to the north, the DPU water tower and tower fencing to the east, the intersection of 29th Street / M Street to the south, and the Ethel Bailey Furman Park property to the west. Motor vehicles will not be allowed on the path.

The shared use path improvements include: an asphalt shared use path with concrete curbing on the edges and a 6” stone base course; proposed landscaping boulders for aesthetics and to prevent motor vehicle use; proposed signs (NO MOTOR VEHICLES) at either end of the path; curb ramps with truncated domes at the 29th/M and 29th/N intersections; and intersection painted crosswalks. All vertical features such as signs and boulders will be located out of the path clear zone.

The path is 10’ wide for the majority of its length. Near the 29th Street / N Street intersection, the path widens to 14’ wide and bends east to aid in maneuverability near the intersection and line up the path with the intersection sidewalk and crosswalk. Near the 29th Street / M Street intersection, the path splits into two 7’ wide paths to line up the paths with the intersection crosswalks.

The project is located within the Church Hill community. Project limits include the area of the shared use path, and sidewalk and intersection areas at 29th/M and 29th/N. The neighborhood is a mix of residential, commercial and municipal/government uses. The DPU water tower is located immediately to the east. The path is located outside of the water tower fencing area and does not conflict with DPU water tower or DPU property operations. The area to the west includes Ethel Bailey Furman Park with tennis and basketball courts, and George Mason Elementary School is nearby to the northwest.

Construction is anticipated to begin in Fall 2018 with an estimated construction period of 60 days. This is a City of Richmond Department of Public Works project managed by Jian Xu, P.E.

As part of their on-call engineering services contract with the City, RK&K was hired to assist the City to provide engineering design services.

This project was presented at a community public meeting held on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at the Sarah Garland Jones Building (2600 Nine Mile Road). Public support for the path was strong and positive. This project is also supported by Councilwoman Cynthia Newbille.

The project budget for the shared use path and associated improvements is \$80,000. Funding source is 80% Federal and 20% City (UPC 109295).

e. Master Plan

The subject property, in which the proposed path is located, is located in the East Planning district as defined by the citywide Master Plan. The Plan suggests that this area remain as public and open space and encourages additional park and open space to be added to existing inventory within the East Planning district as long as it can be properly maintained, and access and security can be controlled so as to no present problems for adjacent residential neighborhoods and/or business owners (page 171).

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Environment section of the Urban Design Guidelines state that “Active parks should have adequate facilities (i.e. sports fields, trash receptacles, benches, running paths, etc.) to accommodate intended users.” The General Characteristics section maintains that “successful public parks, both small and large, active or passive, share certain qualities, which include the ability to attract and entertain visitors, access and connectivity to surrounding areas, and safety and comfort.” Furthermore the Design Considerations section suggests that “impacts to the natural landscape should be assessed and should generally be minimized when constructing man-made elements. A preference should be given toward materials and construction techniques which improve energy efficiency and water/soil quality. 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).

The Guidelines express support for low-impact development, the goal of which is to “mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source” (page 11).

The Public Facilities section of the Urban Design Guidelines contains relevant suggestions on site programming such as “connectivity from the site to adjacent areas should be considered” (page 14).

VI. ATTACHMENTS

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