



To: Public Art Commission
Date: April 8, 2016
RE: **Conceptual approval Section 17.05 Review Maggie L. Walker Memorial Public Art PAC 14-006**

PETITIONER

Ellyn Parker, Secretary to the Public Art Commission, 804-646-1110

LOCATION

98 W Broad Street

Property Owners City of Richmond Right of Way, Dept. of Public Works.

PURPOSE

Section 17.05 Review to give conceptual approval of a public art installation in the form a bronze statue and the surrounding elements that are integral to the art as part of the plaza for the Maggie L Walker memorial.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The public art statue to honor Maggie L Walker was commissioned by Public Art Commission to be created by Antonio "Toby" Mendez in August 2015. The Site team has reviewed and recommended the initial conceptual proposal with considerations after hosting several public meetings and conducting stakeholder interviews to incorporate the ideas and aesthetics that were communicated to the site team and listed in the original call for the artwork.

The artist has developed a conceptual proposal for a statue that is representative of Maggie L. Walker and reflects the themes and elements that were identified by the Site team in the initial call for artwork.

Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Public Art Commission should recommend that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval with the following conditions: That the applicant consider:

1. Strategies to increase the size of the plaza space and expand hardscape to allow for additional plaza use.
2. Incorporate materials into the plaza fixtures that reflect the historical nature of the Jackson Ward neighborhood
3. Re orient seating to face the memorial and public art elements
4. Relocate or remove the dedication wall that is a component of the plaza design

Staff Contact:

Ellyn Parker 804-646-1110

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The site consists of a triangular parcel bounded by N Adams St, W Broad St, and Brook Rd that is owned by the Department of Public Works as part of City right-of-way, as well as the road bed of Brook Rd between W Broad St and N Adams St. In December 2015, the Planning Commission and then City Council passed Ord. 2015-251-245 to close the vehicular travel a portion of Brook Rd located between W Broad St and N Adams St for the purpose of creating an urban plaza as part of a public art project.

b. Scope of Review

The project is subject to review as a public art under Section 17.05 of the City Charter.

At their February 16, 2016 meeting, the Planning Commission resolved that the Public Art Commission is the appropriate body to advise the Commission on the design and location of the public art commemorating Maggie L. Walker and the Urban Design Committee is the appropriate body to advise the Commission on the location, character, and extent of the public plaza surrounding the art. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Project Description and background

a. The public art statue to honor Maggie L Walker was commissioned by Public Art Commission to be created by Antonio "Toby" Mendez in August 2015. The Site team has reviewed the initial conceptual proposal after hosting several public meetings and conducting stakeholder interviews to incorporate the ideas and aesthetics that were communicated to the site team and listed in the original call for the artwork. The initial call for the artwork requested the following elements be considered into the artwork: that the art stimulate thought/discussion and inspire viewers, celebrate the legacy of Maggie L. Walker, serve as a gateway or gathering place for the community and visitors, engage both children and adults, and develop the artwork with community input.

b. The artist has developed a conceptual proposal for a statue that is representative of Maggie L. Walker and will be cast bronze and 9-10ft in height as currently proposed. The pedestal and surrounding benches will be green granite and the pedestal may include four bronze bas reliefs that celebrate accomplishments from the life of Maggie L Walker.

In addition to the creation of the Public Art, the details of the Plaza area are defined below and were reviewed by the Urban Design Committee on April 7, 2016 and conceptual approval was given with considerations to several items.

- c. This project involves the creation of a plaza at the intersection of West Broad Street, North Adams Street, and Brook Road as part of a larger commemoration of Maggie L. Walker, including a statue and interpretive elements.

The concept for the memorial revolves around a central sculpture of Maggie Walker on a pedestal, potentially to include inscriptions about her life, achievements, quotes, and timeline.

The program for the plaza includes: a primary focus on the sculpture plaza with seating; an expanded hardscape for public gathering and reflection upon the art, continuing accommodation of loading, deliveries, and valet parking in support of the existing businesses that face the plaza; and offering flexible space for small events, school field trips, and a starting point for tours of the Jackson Ward neighborhood.

The intent is that construction would begin in August 2016, and the plaza will be completed by December 2016.

d. Master Plan

The 2009 Downtown Plan identified this as part of an Urban Center Area. The Downtown Plan also contains a number of neighborhood-specific recommendations to “celebrate and showcase history with streetscape improvements and signage” (pg. 4.10). These include recommendations that “the historic African American flavor of Jackson Ward be maintained and celebrated...with monuments to important figures in Jackson Ward’s development” (pg. 4.10). Additionally, the plan recommends that “in order to promote Broad St as a local and regional destination, it is essential that its history and cultural institutions be promoted and that a system of gateways and memorable intersections are created along the street” that make “clear-connections between Broad Street and its neighbors, particularly Jackson Ward (pg. 4.8)

The site is part a National Register Historic District as well as the Broad Street City Old & Historic District.

e. Urban Design Guidelines

The 1992 Broad Street Streetscape Design Guidelines, which were adopted by the UDC and have guided streetscape and public realm investment in the area over the last few decades, identify the site as an important Gateway/Key Intersection and have the following recommendations: “Adams Street Triangle – A similar opportunity exists at Adams and Broad with a view of the columns of the former Second Baptist Church to the south and another church on Marshall to the north. Although recently improved by the City with the addition of a live oak, the triangle represents a future opportunity for a small park, particularly if Brook Road between Adams and Broad was closed and restored as a pedestrian space along with the adjacent Northern triangle. This triangle is historically

important as the intersection of a major north-south route (Brook Road) with Broad, and as such, historically had been considered as a natural location for statuary”

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Application & Summary**
- b. Plans**
- c. UDC recommendations**
- d. Meeting reports from 2014/2016**