



Staff Report City of Richmond, Virginia Planning Commission



UDC 2025-08	CONCEPT – Location, Character, and Extent	Meeting Date: 4/15/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Jeannie Welliver / Department of General Services	
Project Description	UDC 2025-08 - CONCEPTUAL - Location, Character, and Extent review of the proposed Shockoe Project initiative located at 1619 East Marshall Street.	
Project Location		
Address: 1619 East Marshall Street		
Property Owner: City of Richmond		
High-Level Details: The Shockoe Project is centered in Shockoe Valley, a historic site where hundreds of thousands of enslaved individuals were bought and sold. The project encompasses both established and proposed elements, including the Richmond Slave Trail, the Reconciliation Statue, the Shockoe Institute (under construction), the National Slavery Museum, Lumpkin's Slave Jail Pavilion, multiple memorials honoring enslaved Africans and burial grounds, and the Winfree Cottage. This submission seeks conceptual approval for the Shockoe Valley masterplan, with a separate request for the schematic design of Lumpkin's Slave Jail Pavilion and related site work. Future submissions will address additional project components, such as the museum and memorials, as they progress.		
UDC Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
	<p>The concept was approved April 10th, 2025.</p> <p>The Urban Design Committee recommended approval with the conditions listed below.</p>	

Staff Contact	Kevin Costanzo - Kevin.Costanzo@rva.gov
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	Please see submitted application.
Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Staff recommends the inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable stormwater features where appropriate to enhance site resilience and minimize runoff.</u> • <u>Staff recommends the use of pervious paving throughout walking paths and gathering spaces, with final details submitted for Final Review.</u> • <u>Staff recommends that any off-street parking include final details regarding location, design, and screening, to be submitted for Final Review.</u> • <u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit final details regarding future transportation plans, with particular attention to supporting the safety, access, and comfort of pedestrians and micro-modal users.</u> • <u>Staff recommends that future plans integrate traffic calming measures around key public areas to enhance pedestrian safety and neighborhood character.</u> • <u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit final details on any design additions incorporating public art, historical, or cultural elements for UDC Final Review.</u> • <u>Staff recommends exploring increased opportunities for ADA-compliant pathways and accommodations throughout the project site.</u> • <u>Staff recommends the applicant provide details regarding species selection, landscaping and planting final plan for UDC's final review.</u> • <u>Staff recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted for the selected landscaping plants and materials for UDC's final review.</u> • <u>Staff recommends that any proposed building or structure be submitted separately for Conceptual and Final Review by the UDC.</u> • <u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit final details regarding each building's height, proportion, massing, design, materials, and site features for UDC review.</u> • <u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit a general lighting plan with outdoor lighting designed to minimize light pollution and / or dark skies compliant if appropriate.</u> • <u>Staff recommends that final details, dimensions, and design of any built feature be submitted for UDC review.</u>

Findings of Fact

Site Description	The site is located in Shockoe Valley, north of Main Street Station, and is bounded by Interstate 95 to the west, Interstate 95 Exit 74C and Oliver Hill Way to the north and east, and Grace Street and Main Street Station to the south. The project area currently consists of open green space, active parking lots, Lumpkin's Slave Jail, and the Winfree Cottage, which is scheduled for relocation prior to development. The surrounding area includes a mix of commercial, industrial, institutional, and mixed-use developments.
Scope of Review	The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.07 and review and recommendation under section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter.
Prior Approvals	N/A
Project Description	The Shockoe Valley Master Plan is a City of Richmond initiative aimed at transforming publicly owned land in Shockoe Valley into a nationally recognized site that interprets the city's role in the domestic slave trade. In 2022, the city engaged Baskervill to develop a comprehensive plan for the area.

	<p>The master plan outlines several key components, including the Shockoe Institute at Main Street Station, which will serve as an educational and interpretive center and is currently under construction. An archaeological pavilion at the Lumpkin’s Slave Jail site is proposed to preserve and interpret this historically significant location. The plan also includes two memorials: one honoring the African Burial Ground, and another recognizing the enslaved individuals who were bought and sold in Shockoe Valley. Conceptual plans envision areas dedicated as public open spaces, such as gardens and event lawns, while additional areas along Broad Street are proposed for retail and dining to integrate commercial activity with the historical and cultural site. A pedestrian bridge is planned to enhance connectivity and serve as a landmark feature for the district. A National Slavery Museum is envisioned as a future component, intended to serve as a central institution for education and historical preservation.</p> <p>While the Shockoe Institute is currently under construction, the other elements of the master plan remain in the conceptual phase and will require further review and refinement. The project design takes inspiration from the Adinkra symbol Nkyinkyim, reflecting themes of historical continuity and interpretation. The plan incorporates African-inspired architectural elements that contrast with the area’s existing built environment, emphasizing themes of water, light, and cultural remembrance. Future phases of the project will continue to be developed and submitted for review as designs progress with the next phase being</p>
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Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	<i>Text</i>	Staff Analysis
Master Plan		
<p>Big Moves:</p> <p>ii. Re-Imagine Priority Growth Nodes (R300, p.187)</p> <p>iv. Provide Greenways & Parks for All (R300, p.197)</p> <p>v. Reconnect the City (R300, p.199)</p> <p>vi. Realign City Facilities (R300, p.201)</p>	<p>2. <i>Target growth in jobs and population to Downtown, Greater Scott’s Addition, Route One Corridor, Southside Plaza, and Stony Point Fashion Park.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Develop parks and greenways so that by 2037 100% of Richmonders live within a 10-minute walk of a park.</i></p> <p>5. <i>Cap highways to reknit neighborhoods destroyed by interstates, build/ improve bridges, introduce street grids, and make the city easier to access by foot, bike, and transit.</i></p> <p>6. <i>Improve City buildings (schools, libraries, fire stations, police stations, etc.) to provide better services in efficient, shared-use, accessible facilities to better match and serve the growing city.</i></p>	<p>The Shockoe site is identified as a Priority Growth Node in <i>Richmond 300</i> (p.195), with the project intended to support population growth and increased cultural activity, contributing to the development of a regional and national destination. The master plan incorporates open spaces, gardens, and memorial parks to expand public access to green spaces in the city (<i>Richmond 300</i>, p.197). Planned improvements, including a pedestrian bridge and enhanced pedestrian pathways, aim to reconnect the area’s fragmented urban fabric and improve multimodal access across barriers such as I-95 (<i>Richmond 300</i>, p.199). The project proposes the creation of a public heritage campus anchored by city and cultural facilities, aligning future municipal investments with goals to serve residents and visitors (<i>Richmond 300</i>, p.201).</p>
Urban Design Guidelines		
<p>Transportation:</p> <p><i>Paving and Surface Materials (pg. 4)</i></p>	<p><i>“The selection of appropriate paving materials should be based upon the following: desired visual image and compatibility with adjacent paving materials, sustainability, performance, durability, maintenance requirements, and cost. Consideration should be given to the coverage of impervious material, the heat</i></p>	<p>The applicant has not submitted any specific material specification for paving or hardscape materials within this submission.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends the inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable stormwater features where appropriate to enhance site resilience and minimize runoff.</u></p>

	<i>impact of paving material, and the potential for stormwater runoff. Landscaping should be used to break up and soften large expanses of impervious paving material."</i>	<u>Staff recommends the use of pervious paving throughout walking paths and gathering spaces, with final details submitted for Final Review.</u>
Transportation: Off-Street Parking - Design (pg. 5)	<p>"All parking spaces should be usable, safely, and conveniently arranged, and well-marked. Accessible parking spaces should be provided in large parking areas and be properly marked. The design of parking and internal circulation should give deference to existing historic and natural features located within and around the site. The design of parking areas should also provide for clearly marked pedestrian routes through and around the parking area.</p> <p>Landscaped islands with well-maintained shade trees or shrubs are encouraged to soften large, paved parking areas and break large expanses of asphalt. The selection of landscaping materials should reflect the hierarchy of the circulation system within the site and context. All parking areas are subject to the landscaping requirements set forth by Article VII, Division 2.1 on the City of Richmond's Zoning Ordinance.</p> <p>Parking areas and incompatible adjacent uses, such as vacant lots, blank walls, and other unattractive streetscape features, should be effectively screened with evergreen landscaping or landscape features."</p>	<p>Parking areas within the Shockoe Project's conceptual plan, are located away from primary public spaces and integrate landscaped islands to soften paved areas. Future phases should continue to prioritize clear pedestrian routes, accessible parking spaces, and evergreen screening to minimize visual impacts from adjacent uses.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that any off-street parking include final details regarding location, design, and screening, to be submitted for Final Review.</u></p>
Transportation: Multimodal Transportation (pg. 6)	<p>"Two of the major objectives stated in the City of Richmond's Master Plan are to increase street-level pedestrian activity while safely and efficiently moving people and goods into and out of the City, and to promote a multimodal transportation system. In order to have a safe and efficient multimodal transportation network, it is integral to design with all modes of transportation in mind. These modes include walking, biking, public transit, as well as motor vehicles. It is the priority of the UDC to support all modes of transportation, giving deference to pedestrians and vulnerable transportation users. For projects involving elements of</p>	<p>The application provides conceptual plan for site circulation which includes multimodal forms of transit which highlights both existing and proposed infrastructure.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit final details regarding future transportation plans, with particular attention to supporting the safety, access, and comfort of pedestrians and micro-modal users.</u></p>

	transportation, both public transit and non-motorized transportation (walking, biking, etc.) should be considered in the design and planning of all projects.”	
Transportation: <i>Traffic Management</i> (pg. 7)	<p>“Traffic calming techniques should slow traffic, decrease un-safe driving practices, as well as minimize cut-through traffic. Traffic calming techniques should be used to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists and enhance neighborhood character. Traffic calming elements, when necessary, should be well designed so that they provide for an aesthetic contribution to the urban character of the neighborhoods in which they are placed.”</p>	<p>The project’s site area is located within high traffic areas in Downtown Richmond. While a majority of the site location is isolated away from motorized forms of traffic, it is important to ensure access, safety and comfort of all vulnerable users.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that future plans integrate traffic calming measures around key public areas to enhance pedestrian safety and neighborhood character.</u></p>
Environment: <i>Public Parks - Universal Design</i> (pg. 9)	<p><i>“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. The design of small neighborhood parks will vary from the design of large regional parks.</i></p> <p><i>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. It is important that the design of public parks facilitate programming that furthers placemaking, or the creative patterns of use that leverage physical, cultural, and societal identities to define a place.</i></p> <p><i>Public park design should incorporate design elements that ensure equal access to all users. Site limitations should be evaluated, and access to all sites and site features should be universal. Accessible ramps and other physical accommodations should be components of the overall design and not a separate feature, protecting the dignity of all users. Access limitations of each site should be evaluated and informed by public engagement during the design phase of projects.”</i></p>	<p>The submitted application reflects a plan intended to attract, entertain, and inform visitors, enhance access and connectivity throughout downtown, and contribute positively to placemaking and the storytelling of Richmond’s history and vision for the future. Historic elements should be surveyed, and preservation should be considered for existing facilities and landscapes. As this is a multi-phased, long-term project, it is important to be intentional in the design of the project area and deliberate about what is communicated through the creation of this space.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit final details on any design additions incorporating public art, historical, or cultural elements for UDC Final Review.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends exploring increased opportunities for ADA-compliant pathways and accommodations throughout the project site.</u></p>
Environment: <i>Landscaping - Design</i>	<p><i>“Plantings should be compatible with and relate to surrounding landscapes. Site landscaping should complement and soften</i></p>	<p>The application includes conceptual plan of “Shockoe Creek Gardens” which provide a</p>

<p>& Species Diversity (pg. 10)</p>	<p><i>new construction and building architecture. Plant materials should create spaces by providing walls and canopies in outdoor areas. Landscaping should not only provide a sense of scale and seasonal interest but should also be designed to minimize human impact on the environment. Designs that include conservation landscaping, strategically minimize the urban heat island effect, or decrease stormwater runoff are strongly encouraged. Trees for pedestrian comfort should be the predominant plant material in an urban setting and chosen according to the context of the street</i></p> <p><i>Landscape plans should include a diverse palette of plant species that include evergreen trees, flowering and shade tree species, shrubs, ground cover, and annual and perennial plantings.”</i></p>	<p>general visualization of landscaping for the site location.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends the applicant provide details regarding species selection, landscaping and planting final plan for UDC’s final review.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted for the selected landscaping plants and materials for UDC’s final review.</u></p>
<p>Public Facilities: General Site Design - Building Orientation & Site Features: (pg. 13)</p>	<p><i>“Guidelines suggest that buildings should be oriented toward the primary street that borders the site and architecturally acknowledge all adjacent public right-of-way. A building's entrance should be easily recognizable, at ground level, and appropriately design to accommodate persons of differing mobility levels. Efficiency should be considered when deciding building location and orientation such as passive solar heating design and maximization of natural light.</i></p> <p><i>The site should respond to its users through its design and by providing an appropriate array of amenities to serve those users. Circulation within the site should be geared toward pedestrian movements, not vehicular. Connectivity from the site to adjacent areas should be considered during the design phase and include accommodations for non-motorized means of transit and other micro-modal transportation, such as bicycle parking, bike racks, showers, restrooms, and air pumps. A building’s height, width, and relationship to adjacent structures should appear balanced and be compatible with neighboring structures.”</i></p>	<p>The project’s conceptual site plan includes multiple structures, such as the Lumpkin’s Slave Jail Pavilion and the National Slavery Museum. As the master plan is forecasted for long-term, multi-phased implementation, each individual building or structure should be independently submitted and reviewed. Future designs should use high-quality, durable materials appropriate to the historical significance and high visitation levels anticipated</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that any proposed building or structure be submitted separately for Conceptual and Final Review by the UDC.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit final details regarding each building’s height, proportion, massing, design, materials, and site features for UDC review.</u></p>
<p>Community Character: Streetscapes (pg. 17)</p>	<p><i>“The goal of the general lighting plan should be to define appropriate light coverage and illumination levels, type and color of</i></p>	<p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant submit a general lighting plan with outdoor lighting</u></p>

	<p><i>lighting, location, fixture style, and the height and angles of lights. A general lighting plan is required for plans of developments, community unit plans, and any comprehensive streetlight project. The lighting plan should differentiate in the scale of lights required for roadway (vehicular) and for walkway (pedestrian) lighting. Light height and spacing is generally determined by the lamp output and the desired average illumination on the roadway and pedestrian walkway."</i></p>	<p><u><i>designed to minimize light pollution and / or dark skies compliant if appropriate.</i></u></p>
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