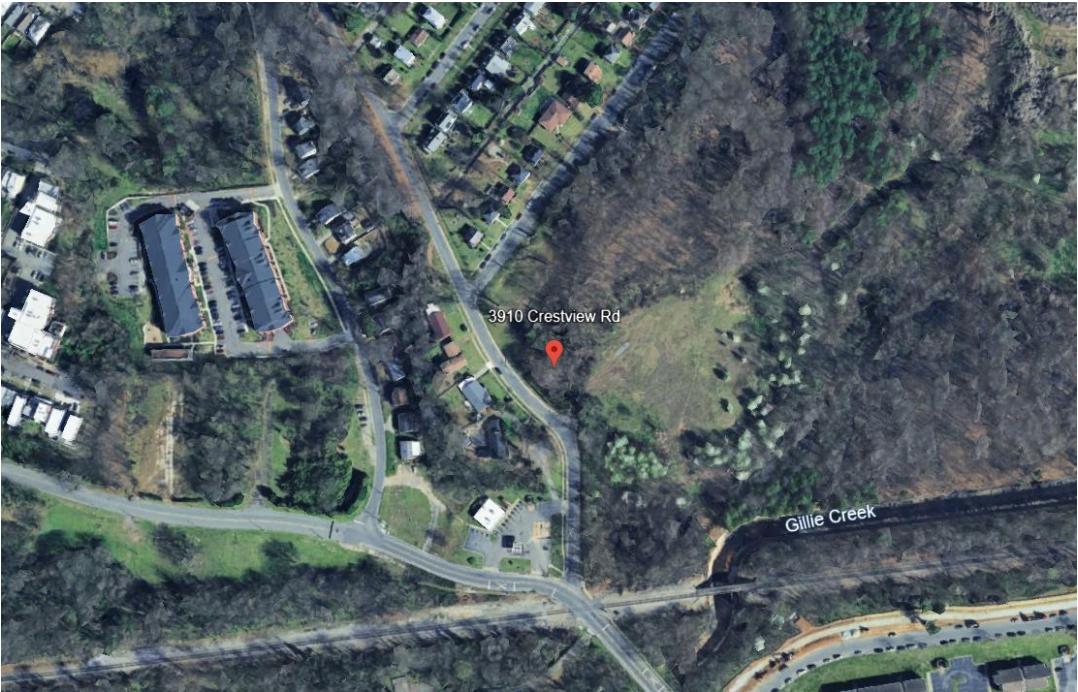




Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia
Planning Commission



UDC 2025-28	Conceptual Review	Meeting Date: 9/16/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Dexter Goode / City of Richmond – Special Capital Projects	
Project Description	UDC 2025-28 – CONCEPTUAL – Location, Character, and Extent review of the proposed Richmond Police Department Equestrian Center, located at 3910 Crestview Road, Richmond, VA 23223.	
Project Location		
Address: 3910 Crestview Road		
Property Owner: City of Richmond		
High-Level Details: The Equestrian Center will include a barn to house the RPD's mounted patrol unit, and administrative support space for the officers who are assigned to the mounted unit. There will be site amenities to support training and care for the horses including a training area, pastures, and parking areas.		
UDC Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Kevin Costanzo - kevin.costanzo@rva.gov	
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	Please see Applicant Narrative.	
Conditions for Approval	UDC recommends the following conditions: 1. UDC recommends that final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant, where applicable. 2. UDC recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable storm water features, where appropriate, and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines. 3. UDC recommends the Applicant explore opportunities for interpretive signage or public art where feasible. 4. UDC recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible. 5. UDC recommends the Applicant ensure ADA-compliant pedestrian connections between parking, barns, and offices, and explore micro-mobility accommodations (e.g., bicycle racks) where appropriate. 6. UDC recommends the Applicant explore permeable paving alternatives in low-traffic parking or drive areas to reduce stormwater runoff impacts.	

	7. UDC recommends the Applicant provide details on site fencing types for FINAL review, avoiding chain link fencing visible from the street. 8. UDC recommends the Applicant to further evaluate potential building location(s) with an emphasis on minimizing adverse impacts to existing tree canopy coverage. 9. UDC recommends the Applicant to conduct public outreach, including community meetings and direct engagement with surrounding neighborhoods, to solicit and document community input. 10. UDC recommends the Applicant to provide updated renderings demonstrating the interaction of the final design with the public right-of-way and street-level façade.
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Findings of Fact

Site Description	The ~7-acre site is located off Crestview Road in the City's East End, near residential neighborhoods (R-5 zoning), commercial (B-3 zoning), and municipal property (M-1 zoning). The parcel includes both upland and low-lying areas with portions overlapping the FEMA 100-year and 500-year floodplains. Surrounding land uses include single-family residences, public works facilities, and open green space.
Scope of Review	This project is subject to Location, Character, and Extent review under Section 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter, with design recommendations under Section 17.05.
Prior Approvals	N/A
Project Description	<u>The Applicant States:</u> The new Richmond Police Department Equestrian Center is a relocation of the Mounted Unit to a safer and more operationally suitable facility. Key features include: • A barn with indoor arena and 8 stalls, designed for durability and safety. • Pastures (±120,000 SF) cleared and seeded to allow early relocation of horses during construction. • A two-level office facility with break rooms, locker rooms, restrooms, and conference space. • Outdoor training ring and round pen (20,000 SF) for mounted patrol exercises. • Parking and trailer facilities, with ADA accessibility. • Landscaping and fencing to buffer adjacent properties and improve ecological function. <u>Staff Review:</u> Staff has reviewed the submitted narrative, application, and concept drawings against the Urban Design Guidelines. Overall, the proposal reflects the functional requirements of a civic equestrian facility while also addressing security, animal care, and administrative needs. The project's siting along Crestview Road places the office and barn structures inward toward pastures, buffering them from adjacent residences. Circulation patterns are primarily vehicular in this early phase of design, with asphalt and gravel drives leading to parking and trailer areas. While this is consistent with the operational nature of the facility, further refinement of pedestrian pathways is recommended to ensure accessibility and safe circulation between the barn, office, and parking areas. The proposed landscaping includes pasture mixes, canopy trees, and native understory species, aligning with the Guidelines' emphasis on biodiversity and ecological resilience.

Staff notes that chain link fencing is typically discouraged; and would encourage that fencing be dark-vinyl-coated or wood, with evergreen landscape buffering where feasible- details to be provided at FINAL review. Chain link should be avoided visible from the street.

Finally, given the historic significance of the Mounted Unit, Staff would encourage exploring any opportunity to incorporate public art if feasible.

Staff Recommendation

Staff Recommends Approval, with Conditions

1. Staff recommends that final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant, where applicable.
2. Staff recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable stormwater features, where appropriate, and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.
3. Staff recommends the inclusion of public art, where feasible.
4. Staff recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible.
5. Ensure ADA-compliant pedestrian connections between parking, barns, and offices, and explore micro-mobility accommodations (e.g., bicycle racks) where appropriate.
6. Explore permeable paving alternatives in low-traffic parking or drive areas to reduce stormwater runoff impacts.
7. Provide details on site fencing types for FINAL review, avoiding chain link fencing visible from the street.
8. Explore opportunities for interpretive signage or public art where feasible.

UDC recommendation to Planning Commission

The UDC reviewed the application and discussed the materials of the architecture, the public outreach to the adjacent neighborhood and recommended returning to the neighborhood with the current iteration, that the FINAL should better demonstrate how the project fits into the urban fabric, adding pedestrian access from the street, larger windows on the dormer and how the architecture addresses the street, location of lighting and dark-sky compliance, stormwater management and how natural pollution is filtered, if the proposed cupola's belong in the City of Richmond, composting, public access to the site, tree canopy retention.

The UDC recommended approval with the following conditions:

- UDC recommends that final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant, where applicable.
- UDC recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable storm water features, where appropriate, and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.
- UDC recommends the Applicant explore opportunities for interpretive signage or public art where feasible.
- UDC recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible.
- UDC recommends the Applicant ensure ADA-compliant pedestrian connections between parking, barns, and offices, and explore micro-mobility accommodations (e.g., bicycle racks) where appropriate.
- UDC recommends the Applicant explore permeable paving alternatives in low-traffic parking or drive areas to reduce stormwater runoff impacts.

	- UDC recommends the Applicant provide details on site fencing types for FINAL review, avoiding chain link fencing visible from the street. - UDC recommends the Applicant to further evaluate potential building location(s) with an emphasis on minimizing adverse impacts to existing tree canopy coverage. - UDC recommends the Applicant to conduct public outreach, including community meetings and direct engagement with surrounding neighborhoods, to solicit and document community input. - UDC recommends the Applicant to provide updated renderings demonstrating the interaction of the final design with the public right-of-way and street-level façade.
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Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	Text	Staff Analysis
Master Plan		
Big Moves:	<i>Reconnect the City (R300, p.199)</i>	Establishes a civic-oriented police facility integrated within a residential context, improving safety and accessibility.
	<i>Realign City Facilities (R300, p.201)</i>	Modernizes and relocates a critical City facility to meet operational needs and improve service delivery.
Urban Design Guidelines		
	<i>Transportation: Paving and Surface Materials (p. 4)</i>	The project includes asphalt and gravel paving for drives and parking. Staff recommends exploring permeable paving alternatives in low-traffic areas to reduce stormwater runoff impacts.
	<i>Transportation: Multimodal Transportation (p. 6)</i>	While primarily a specialized facility, staff recommends inclusion of bicycle racks or similar amenities at the office building to support multimodal access.
	<i>Environment: Landscaping – Design (p. 10)</i>	Proposed pasture mixes and tree plantings are appropriate, but a detailed plan should be submitted with emphasis on native species, biodiversity, and long-term maintenance.
	<i>Environment: Stormwater Management and Low Impact Development (p. 11)</i>	Concept plans include stormwater conveyance channels. Engineered BMP details are needed at Final Review to demonstrate compliance with LID standards.
	<i>Public Facilities: General Site Design (p. 13)</i>	Current design is vehicle oriented. Staff recommends clearer ADA-compliant pedestrian routes and consideration of small-scale multimodal amenities where appropriate.

	<i>Community Character: Lighting (p. 18)</i>	Lighting details not provided; staff recommends a full plan at Final Review to ensure compliance
	<i>Community Character: Site Furnishings (p. 21)</i>	Specification sheets for benches, receptacles, and fencing should be submitted at Final Review for consistency and durability.
	<i>Community Character: Walls, Fencing, and Screening (p. 21)</i>	Security and pasture fencing should use wood or dark-vinyl-coated materials, supplemented with evergreen buffering.