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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: March 20, 2017  
RE: **Final Location, Character and Extent review of Westhampton Streetscape Improvements – Patterson Ave. (between Maple Ave. & Willow Lawn Dr.); Grove Ave. (between Maple Ave. & Westview Ave.); UDC No. 2017-11**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Yongping Wang, Department of Public Works

**II. LOCATION**

Patterson Ave. (between Maple Ave. & Willow Lawn Dr.)  
Grove Ave. (between Maple Ave. & Westview Ave.)

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond Department of Public Works

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for the final location, character, and extent review of streetscape modifications on Patterson and Grove Ave. as part of a set of streetscape design guidelines.

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

This proposal shows a careful consideration to the existing furnishings and community character of the streetscape, between the existing curb and property line, on Patterson and Grove Ave, and attempts to create a more unified character for the two areas as stated in the Master Plan. The 2011 Master Plan for this area is very clear that the goal for these two corridors in the future, particularly Patterson Ave, is to create a complete street with an excellent pedestrian environment and improved bicycle accommodations that support a neighborhood-scale mixed use shopping district. The proposed design does many things called out as specific goals in the Master Plan, including providing gateway signage and pedestrian amenities, increasing tree plantings and shade, and landscaping that promotes a sense of place. This plan also addresses the sidewalk width clearance by instituting a 4' clear minimum throughout the project area. Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the final design, with the following recommendations:

- That the applicant further consider ways to increase pedestrian right-of-way and sidewalk width throughout the corridors when individual projects are reviewed
- That the applicant further consider bicycle parking accommodations when individual projects are reviewed
- That the applicant work with the Transportation Engineering division to establish a complete streets vision for the project when the time is appropriate
- That the applicant substitute the Chinese Pistache and Red Maple with larger canopy trees such as an Elm, Oak, or similar and that this substitution be implemented into the streetscape design guidelines

**Staff Contact:**

Josh Son, (804) 646-3741

**V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

**a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

Patterson Ave between Maple Ave and Glenburnie/Westview Ave is zoned B2, a commercial district that allows for more strip-like development with parking in front. West of Glenburnie/Westview Ave to Willow Lawn it is zoned R5 residential to the North side of the street, despite containing commercial uses, and RO2 to the South. One parcel is in the R2 residential district at the intersection with Willow Lawn.

Grove Ave between Maple Ave and Granite Ave is part of an Urban Business district, with a parking overlay that reduces some off-street parking requirements. A requirement of the Urban Business District land use and zoning is to locate parking in the rear of buildings, have limited setbacks from the street, and reduce curb cuts. The block between Granite and Westview Ave is currently zoned R4 as part of a residential district, but contains many commercial uses within converted houses that are setback much further from the street.

**b. Scope of Review**

The proposed improvements are subject to location, character, and extent review as a “public way” under Section 17.07 of the City Charter.

**c. UDC Review History**

In July 2016, the UDC reviewed and the Planning Commission approved the conceptual plans with the following recommendations:

- That the applicant consider ways to increase pedestrian right-of-way and sidewalk width throughout the corridors
- That the applicant address bicycle accommodations within their streetscape plan
- That any on-street parking be marked as a lane, not stalls, to allow for compact and super-compact cars and consider EV charging stations within the corridor
- That the applicant work with the Transportation Engineering division to establish a complete streets vision for the project
- That the applicant clarify the pedestrian lighting offset, and ensure a spacing of 40-60 feet as recommended by the Urban Design Guidelines
- That the applicant consider treatments other than a brick band for the sidewalk treatment
- To consider elements more in line with the period of when the neighborhood was established, a la 1940s-1950s
- To consider the use of more native plantings in the corridors

In 1994, the UDC reviewed streetscape improvements and street lighting improvements to the Libbie & Grove area.

**d. Project Description**

This project provides design guidelines for the streetscape along Patterson Avenue and Grove Avenue within the Westhampton Commercial District. While an initial Phase 1 is being developed for implementation, these guidelines would guide future streetscape investments in the area.

Sidewalks in the area are currently “overwhelmingly concrete with the exception of one stretch on Patterson”, as the plans say. There are a few stamped asphalt crosswalks in the Grove Ave area. There are no brick sidewalks in the area surveyed.

Tree wells will be expanded and planted with groundcovers. New trees are proposed as Red Maple, Red Bud, and Chinese Pistache. Grove Ave would be planted on both sides of the street with Red Maple; Patterson is proposed to have Red Bud on the north side of the street under the utility lines, and the Chinese Pistache on the south side of Patterson. A variety of ground cover plant options are proposed in the plans. Tree well offset varies through the plan.

City standard benches, trashcans, and bike racks are proposed throughout the project. On Patterson Ave, more benches and street furniture are proposed where there are fewer driveways, predominantly on the Northside of the street, with the exception of bus stops. A bench, trash can, and bike rack are clustered in the plan. On the dimensional plans, all benches are parallel to the street and, unless near a bus stop, face away from the street.

On Grove Ave, these clusters of street furniture are located at bus stops and predominately in the blocks with minimal curb-cuts. On the dimensional plans, all benches are parallel to the street and, unless near a bus stop, face away from the street.

The plans call for brushed concrete and a gridded scoring pattern in areas planned for sidewalk improvement. The plans say concrete clearly defines driveway entrances where it crosses the tighter gridded scoring pattern. Additionally, the plans note that if pedestrian access routes are being provided, a minimum 4' traversable width is required with a max 2% cross slope.

Throughout the project, more pronounced crosswalk markings will emphasize the pedestrian presence.

Entrance signs are proposed at either end of both corridors; the plans show three options. Banners would be mounted on utility poles in the middle of the street on Grove Ave. and on both sides of the street on Patterson Ave.

The project proposes the Charleston light fixture as a continuation of the decorative pedestrian lighting already found in the area. Most streetlights are shown at least 40' apart except on Grove Ave., between Maple Ave. and Granite Ave., where they are existing and not being proposed to be relocated.

Funding of \$370,000 has been secured to execute a limited amount of the design as a first phase along the 5700 block of Patterson Ave.

#### **e. Master Plan**

The 2011 Master Plan Amendment focused on Libbie/Patterson/Grove focused on the need for streetscape improvements, particularly envisioning how public infrastructure improvements and redevelopment along Patterson would help create a more consistent mixed use district. The amendment says “Patterson needs a thorough re-thinking as a “complete street” that serves pedestrians, school children, the elderly, and cyclists, and that reinforce neighborhood connections [as part of] a dynamic and coherent system of public spaces and walkable streets”

“A redesign of these streets, as shown on the following graphic, should at least explore all of the following:

- Wider sidewalks
- Landscaped medians
- Landscaping that promotes the sense of place
- Bike lanes, preferably buffered
- Generous crosswalks at major intersections, with curb extensions (bump-outs)
- Trees and other shading devices
- Higher level of amenities for pedestrians, including better sidewalks, lighting, seating, and way-finding
- Redesign of the Patterson and Libbie intersection, which is one of the big obstacles to Patterson becoming better connected to the rest of the district
- Gateway treatments at key places should mark entrances to the Grove-Libbie-Patterson shopping district

“The attractive tree-lined streetscape of the neighborhood streets and sidewalks needs to be continuous all the way to the arterials to help break up the monotonous concrete environment of Patterson. Bringing the typical streetscape, with trees and good sidewalks, all the way to Patterson will be part of the strategy to signal to drivers that they are driving through a neighborhood place, making the corridor more attractive, and helping reduce traffic speeds. It will also encourage walkability and connectivity.”

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Community Character section of the Urban Design Guidelines contains several suggestions on landscaping, noting that “generally, new street trees should be located a minimum of 35’ from each other and three feet from the curb” and that “generally, a street tree should be no closer than 12 feet from a streetlight” (page 21). “Entrances and pedestrian walkways should enhance the streetscape and delineate an edge between pedestrian walkways and the street. Appropriate landscaping should be used to clearly define entrances and pedestrian walkways” (page 20).

“Site furnishings should be conveniently located for the pedestrian, but should not obstruct pedestrian circulation. Furnishings should be located where people congregate, such as at bus stops, in front of major attractions, and in parks and plazas. The placement of furnishings should not create visual clutter on the streetscape. Furnishings may be grouped together, where appropriate. However, trash receptacles should be placed in the vicinity of bench groupings, but not

directly adjacent, because of wasps and other insects in summer months.” (page 25).

The Guidelines also encourage alternatives to metal tree grates, unless a precedent has been established in the area (page 21). Finally, the Guidelines state that lighting and street fixtures should be consistent with the existing fixtures in the surrounding area and that pedestrian light poles should be placed 40 to 60 feet apart (page 22, 25).

## **VI. ATTACHMENTS**

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