



Staff Report
 City of Richmond, Virginia
Planning Commission



UDC 2024-40	Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent Review	Meeting Date: 11/19/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	Ryan Rinn, Department of Parks and Recreation	
Project Description	UDC 2024-40 CONCEPT Location Character and Extent review of the proposed Westover Park located at 1301 Jahnke Road.	
Project Location		
Address: 1301 Jahnke Road		
Property Owner: CITY OF RICHMOND SCHOOL BOARD		
High-Level Details: <p>The Applicant proposes a new community park located in what is currently used as part of the adjacent Elementary School’s open space and sports fields. Highlights include play area, promenade, sports fields, dog park, and skate park.</p>		
UDC Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, Planner, raymond.roakes@rva.gov	
Previous Reviews	NA	
Staff Recommendations	RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final details on outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant. • Inclusion of permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines. • The re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible. • A maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to include landscaping, sustainability features, public spaces, and splash-pad. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant incorporate public art, where feasible. • Applicant to work with GRTC Staff to evaluate to collocate any bus stops with the entrance of the park and to improve any potential bus stop locations to GRTC standards.
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Findings of Fact

Site Description	<p>The site is located in the Forest View neighborhood at the intersection of Forest Hill Avenue and Jahnke Road. The property is roughly 15 acres in size, including the existing elementary school. The project site currently encompasses sports fields used by the existing school. The project is surrounded largely by residential uses with commercial uses along major roads. Higher density multifamily is envisioned by the Master Plan along Forest Hill Avenue and Westover Hills Boulevard, adjacent to the site.</p> <p>The GRTC Bus Route #2B runs along Jahnke Rd and Route #20 along Forest Hill Ave, directly adjacent to the property, with bus stops at the northwest corner of the property.</p>
Scope of Review	<p>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</p>
Project Description	<p>The site currently is developed with sports fields and courts, used by the adjacent elementary school. Banks of trees buffer the space from adjacent uses.</p> <p>As part of the project, the space currently used by the school will be redesigned so that it can be used by both the school and the community. With that, new access points will be designed to enter from the street and walk to the interior of the site.</p> <p>A walking trail, playground, picnic shelter and bathroom, skate park, basketball court, pickleball court, hand ball court, dog park, baseball field, and soccer field are proposed. Parking will be shared with the school.</p> <p>An entry plaza is proposed at the corner of Forest Hill and Jahnke.</p> <p>Native plantings are proposed for the project; final plantings will be coordinated with Forestry Staff.</p> <p>The Applicant states:</p> <p>“The Westover Park project will enhance existing park features and improve access to recreational resources. Through on-site meetings and a virtual meeting, the community has had the opportunity to engage in the planning and design process. Westover Park has the potential to become a civic common with many amenities for its surrounding communities. The implementation of the master plan will be a phased approach.”</p> <p>“The major concern from the community is availability and enhancement of existing sports facilities. Existing sport courts are in disrepair with damage to the court surfacing and fencing. Access to these facilities is also difficult, as there is no central trail or sidewalk to connect the amenities, leaving visitors to walk through the grass fields. During and after storm events these fields become heavily flooded or muddy due to the lack of necessary drainage systems.”</p> <p>“Parking has also become a major concern for park users, the school, and the adjacent developments. There is limited parking available for teachers in the elementary school parking lot, leaving many teachers to park in the grass, often directly in the root zone of mature trees. The adjacent developments have also indicated that they are having issues with park guests parking in their residential lots and taking up spaces intended for their retail patrons.”</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>Staff recommends approval with standard conditions.</p> <p>Staff supports the improvement of public space in an area of the City that is growing in population, especially apartment units that do not have personal yards for green space. The location is also adjacent to an existing school/community center space that will greatly benefit from the improvements. The park amenities will provide interest for a number of different users and high quality pedestrian spaces are being provided.</p>

	<p>_____</p> <p>The UDC recommends approval with the Staff recommended conditions.</p> <p>The UDC discussed access to the park, fencing, and stormwater.</p>
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Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	Text	Staff Analysis
Master Plan		
<i>Big Moves: Realign City Facilities</i>		
	<p>Objective 4.2 – Integrate public art into the built environment.</p> <p><i>c. Link public art with major public facility initiatives (e.g., plazas, buildings, parks, bridges) and expand the definition of public art to include architectural embellishments of buildings, or landscape features.</i></p> <p>Objective 15.4 - Reduce the amount of waste going to landfills.</p> <p><i>f. Demonstrate sustainable consumption, sustainable building practices, and zero-waste behaviors in the design and expansion of City operations.</i></p> <p>Objective 17.7 Increase and enhance biodiversity</p> <p><i>b. Increase the prevalence of native plant species and plants for healthy pollinator communities at public facilities</i></p> <p><i>c. Implement the RVA Clean Water strategy to use 80% native plants in new landscaping at public facilities by 2023.</i></p> <p><i>g. Encourage bird houses, bat houses, and other structures that provide important and safe shelters for wildlife.</i></p> <p>Objective 17.8 Reduce light pollution.</p> <p><i>b. Install hooded light fixtures on public rights-of-way and buildings to reduce light pollution and reduce effect on nocturnal species.</i></p>	<p>Master Plan Objectives</p> <p>Landscaping and lighting details will be established at a later stage, but should include sustainability considerations.</p>

Urban Design Guidelines		
GRTC Transit Stops - Page 6	<p><i>A comfortable, safe, and quality environment should be created at transit stops.... Standard bus shelters and other bus stop furniture that have been approved by the UDC, the City Planning Commission, and GRTC should be used at GRTC transit stops with high ridership and must be installed in a way that doesn't obstruct the public right-of-way or accessibility. Benches installed at transit stops should have arm rests in the middle of the bench for the comfort of riders and to discourage its use for activities other than a short-term wait for the bus.</i></p>	<p><u>Staff recommends Applicant to work with GRTC Staff to evaluate to collocate any bus stops with the entrance of the park and to improve any potential bus stop locations to GRTC standards.</u></p>
PAVING AND SURFACE MATERIALS – Page 3	<p><i>The design guidelines suggest compatibility, performance, durability, maintenance requirements, cost, and sustainability be considered when designing pavement areas. Impervious areas should be limited and pervious pavement materials should be introduced, especially in minimally used parking areas.</i></p>	<p>PAVING AND SURFACE MATERIALS</p> <p>Hardscape materials will be finalized at a later stage.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to include landscaping, sustainability features, public spaces, and splash-pad.</u></p>
LANDSCAPING – Page 10	<p><i>Plantings should be compatible with and relate to surrounding landscapes. Site landscaping should complement and soften new construction and building architecture. Plant materials should create spaces by providing walls and canopies in outdoor areas. In addition, landscaping should provide a sense of scale and seasonal interest. Species diversity, plant selection, and long term maintenance should be considered.</i></p>	<p>LANDSCAPING</p> <p>A significant portion of the site will be green space.</p>
SITE FEATURES – Page 14	<p><i>The site should respond to its users through its design and by providing an appropriate array of amenities to serve those users and should incorporate sustainable design aspects. Plazas are encouraged and should provide pleasant transition from street to building while being designed in inviting and accommodating ways for a diversity of users.</i></p>	<p>A number of outdoor spaces and amenities add interest and usable space for pedestrians. This diversity of uses will enhance pedestrian activity throughout the site.</p>