



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2022-112 - To amend Ord. No. 2021-042, adopted May 24, 2021, which accepted a program of proposed Capital Improvement Projects for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and the four fiscal years thereafter, adopted a Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, and determined a means of financing the same, by providing for a revised description and scope for the School Modernization – George Wythe High School project in the Education category, transferring funds in the amount of \$7,310,391.00 from the School Planning and Construction project in the Education category, and appropriating such transferred funds to the School Modernization - George Wythe High School project in the Education category for the purpose of funding the planning and design of a new George Wythe High School.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: April 18, 2022

PETITIONER

Jason P. May Director of Budget & Strategic Planning

LOCATION

George Wythe High School, 4314 Crutchfield Street

PURPOSE

To amend Ord. No. 2021-042, adopted May 24, 2021, which accepted a program of proposed Capital Improvement Projects for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and the four fiscal years thereafter, adopted a Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, and determined a means of financing the same, by transferring funds in the amount of \$7,310,391.00 from the School Planning and Construction project in the Education category, appropriating such transferred funds to the School Modernization - George Wythe High School project in the Education category for the purpose of funding the planning and design of a new George Wythe High School, and providing for a revised description and scope for such School Modernization - George Wythe High School project in the Education category.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

In April 2021, the Richmond School Board voted 5-4 to adopt a resolution that would allow the School Board to manage the procurement and construction processes to build new schools. However, as the School Board does not have a dedicated revenue source for school construction, the City of Richmond will continue to serve as the fiscal agent. This ordinance serves to transfer currently available funds for design services specifically for a new George Wythe High School. Funds for valid expenses incurred for design of the new George Wythe High School will be reimbursed to RPS monthly in a manner similar to School Capital Maintenance projects managed by the RPS. Additional funds may become available after the close-out of the River City, Cardinal, and Henry Marsh school projects. Even though the construction of these new schools was complete in the fall of 2020, the close-out costs are reliant on RPS agreeing to no additional changes to the projects.

This project provides for the design and construction of a high school for 1,800 students with a total of 280,000 square feet, including design of a minimum classroom space of 74,880 square feet with future expansion capability for additional classroom space of 8,320 square feet, to replace the existing George Wythe High School (“GWHS”) with a design approved by the Superintendent of Richmond Public Schools (“RPS”) pursuant to section 22.1-140 of the Code of Virginia that meets the requirements of the Code of Virginia, the latest version of the Virginia Department of Education’s Guidelines for School Facilities in Virginia Public Schools established pursuant to section 22.1-138 of the Code of Virginia (“VDOE Guidelines”) and those portions of the Richmond Public Schools Division-wide Educational Specifications, dated Spring 2007, applicable to high schools (“RPS High School Specifications”). This project contemplates the RPS-procured architect’s development of the school’s design after analyzing the existing buildings, site requirements, transportation needs, finances and budget, grade structure, joint use of facilities and community objectives for funding, educational trends, and time schedule and in recognition of present and long-term student capacity needs. Typical (per VDOE Guide-lines) classroom size is 800 square feet; with a grossing factor of 30 percent, a typical classroom equates to 1,040 square feet. The RPS High School Specifications set the student-to-teacher ratio at 25:1. These two elements result in every 100 students equating to 4,160 square feet of classroom space. The design standards for ancillary spaces, i.e., gym, cafeteria, restrooms, media center(s), corridors, and administrative areas are specified in the VDOE Guidelines.

Capital Improvement Plan

FY2022 Budget Amendment CAPITAL BUDGET						
New or Existing Project	Category	Award #	Project Name	Prior Year Appropriations	Amendment Increase/ (Decrease)	Modified FY22 Budget
Existing	Education	500160	School Planning & Construction	\$ 7,310,391	\$(7,310,391)	\$ -
Existing	Education	New	School Modernization - George Wythe High School	-	7,310,391	\$7,310,391
Capital Budget Amendment				7,310,391	-	\$7,310,391

Staff recommends approval of this request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

SITE DESCRIPTION

George Wythe High School, 4314 Crutchfield Street.

PROPOSED USE FOR THE PROPERTY

Design and construction of a high school for 1,800 students

MASTER PLAN

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for this property as Institutional which is defined as “Public and quasi-public entities, such as local, state, and federal government,

hospitals, universities, schools, and religious institutions.” The development style includes “Several buildings owned by an institution are often connected by an engaging character that creates a campus-like environment. Active commercial ground floor uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Residential uses may be permitted on the ground floor in certain sections of the area. Regardless, ground floor residential units should still have street-oriented façades with setbacks, front yards, and balconies where appropriate. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveway entrances are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages and minimal driveway entrances are allowed on secondary streets. Ground floor parking is prohibited on principal street frontages. The development intensity varies.”

Primary Uses: Institutional, cultural, government, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Retail/office/personal service and multi-family. (p. 69)

The property is adjacent to the Southside Plaza Area Priority Growth Node which envisions a “...bustling center of South Richmond, offering employment, housing, recreation, and entertainment in a walkable human-scale environment. This area serves as a multi-modal transportation hub with connections to a regional greenway system via the James River Branch Trail and to the regional transit system with multiple bus lines converging in the Southside Plaza area. New City facilities anchor the redevelopment of this area by providing government services and green space.” (p. 48)

ZONING

The site is located in the R-4 Single-Family Residential Zoning District.

SURROUNDING AREA

A mix of commercial, single-family attached, and multi-family residential uses are present in the general area.

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