




Staff Report  
City of Richmond, Virginia

Urban Design Committee



UDC 2023-12	FINAL Location, Character, Extent Review		Meeting Date: 6/8/2023
Applicant/Petitioner	Shelly Barrick Parsons, Capital Trees (in partnership with PRCF)		
Project Description	FINAL Location, Character, and Extent review to expand and enhance green space at Hotchkiss Park, located at 715 E Brookland Park Boulevard		
Project Location			
Address: 715 E Brookland Park Boulevard			
Property Owner: CITY OF RICHMOND RECREATION & PARKS			
High-Level Details: Capital Trees (nonprofit) in partnership with Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities requests to renovate an existing open space at an existing community center to provide greater landscaping, play areas, and programed green space.			
UDC Recommendation	Approval with Conditions		
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, Planner, raymond.roakes@rva.gov		
Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews	Multiple community engagement events in 2021 to determine future of community center		
Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff recommends that outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant.</li><li>Staff recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.</li><li>Staff recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible.</li></ul>		

## Findings of Fact

Site Description	The site currently includes Hotchkiss Field Community Center, associated outdoor ball fields, community garden, play area, and community pool.
Scope of Review	The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 and 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter.
Prior Approvals	NA
Project Description	<p>The Applicant states: Capital Trees' mission is to create more public green space, an essential for community health and well-being. As a public-private partnership, the organization brings together the City, corporations, non-profits, and community stakeholders to implement these spaces and develop management plans to ensure long-term viability.</p> <p>The proposal is located to the rear of the property and the existing community center, abutting an alleyway. The affected area is currently an open lawn green space with no improvements or landscaping.</p> <p>The Application proposes increased native landscaping and trees, a walking path, play area, public art, demonstration rain gardens, and seating along the walking path.</p> <p>Staff recommends approval with standard conditions. The proposal includes enhancing a natural landscaping in a green space currently dominated by underutilized lawn. The proposal also includes greater programming both for youth and other populations.</p>

## Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	Text	Staff Analysis
<b>Master Plan</b>		
	<p>Objective 17.2 Increase city-wide tree canopy from 42% to 60%</p> <p>Objective 17.3 Reduce urban heat, prioritizing areas with a high heat vulnerability index rating, as shown in Figure 44.</p>	To reach these goals, the City and other entities must work together to maximize the opportunity for new trees, but also enhance the survivability of tree locations in difficult environments such as ROW. The proposed Standards equal or surpass current best practices.
<b>Urban Design Guidelines</b>		
	<i>(P.9) <u>Environment, Public Parks:</u> 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.</i>	The proposal includes a variety of programming and uses to appeal to a wide range of users, increases connectivity to surroundings, and increases comfort of users through further landscaping and facilities. Safety is enhanced due to potential for increased number of users.
	<i>(p.10) <u>Landscaping, Design:</u> 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</i>	The proposal includes a number of native species that will provide interest year round. Proposal includes rain gardens and natural spaces that are designed to minimize human impact, enhance conservation, reduce urban heat island effect, and reduce stormwater runoff.

	<i>decrease stormwater runoff are strongly encouraged.</i>	
	<i>(P.10) <u>Landscaping, Species Diversity:</u> 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>	Proposal includes diverse palette and native species.