

Lucks Field Community Center Narrative

1925 U St, Richmond VA, 23223

May 17, 2023



Project Purpose:

The City of Richmond is building a community center for the East End neighborhood at the corner of U Street and Rogers Street that will engage, educate, and elevate the lives of its residents. The neighborhood surrounding Lucks Field is residential, surrounded on all sides by a mix of single-family homes and bungalows. A few vacant lots abut the southwest end. Community surveys found that approximately 38% of those who visit the park arrive by walking, while others arrive by biking (9%) or driving (48%) with the remaining arriving by public transportation. The site currently includes a community center facility, baseball field, basketball courts, outdoor shelter, tennis courts, large open space, an outdoor swimming pool and shelter, and a playground.

The program for the project was conceived based on community responses received during an engagement process performed prior to design. The program highlights include a large multipurpose gymnasium, rooftop gardens and play area, and preservation of the existing baseball field.

Funding for the project is made in part by the American Rescue Plan, with \$20M in construction funds going towards a new community center at Lucks Field. Out of this, a construction cost target of \$12,000,000 has been allocated for the building and of \$4,000,000 for site, with the remainder being used soft costs, permitting, etc. Construction for the project is estimated to begin in August 2023 and continue until December 2024.

The building is envisioned as IIB construction type of Assembly (A-3) classification, fully sprinklered.

Underlying Principles:

The building is engaging. Expanses of glass at the pedestrian level invite residents to participate in the activities within the community center. Cantilevered forms create unexpected canopies and recognizable landmarks. Rooftop structures intrigue, fascinate and elevate members of the community capturing the downtown views beyond.

The building consists of four volumes that house separate programming elements. The large 'Multipurpose Gym' is visible from all sides of the site, featuring expanses of glass to engage the neighborhood, and crowned in translucent wall system to create a notable form. To the north sits a one-story brick volume that encapsulates the admin and city functions of the building. The one-story volume, 'Brick Volume,' is scaled to the pedestrian level, with transom lites and a small entrance to the northwest of the site. A two story 'Composite Wood Clad Box' sits to the east of the multipurpose gym and is the main entry connection point to the building. The front façade is engaging and inviting. A smaller 'Metal Clad Volume' sits on top of the 'Wood Clad Box' and multipurpose gym. The metal volume is angled and cantilevers over the wooden box to create an architectural entry canopy.

The building is hub for the transmission of ideas. Programmatic spaces are designed to empower and educate residents. Flexible spaces such as Multimedia libraries and mixed media spaces are designed for the residents to share knowledge or learn new skills. The indoor multipurpose gym is a place for residents to have basketball and volleyball games or host larger events like a neighborhood party. The building will target LEED Silver, so it can be used as a teaching opportunity and model for buildings in the future. The building is a mini city hall of sorts. Through engagement and education, the building is providing residents the tools to elevate themselves.

The building is elevated. A compact footprint leaves much of the greenspace for residents to enjoy. The architecture, featuring a 3-story vertical program, elevates the community and ultimately captures downtown views from the roof.

Landscape:

Community feedback resoundingly indicated the historic significance of Lucks Field, and residents strongly preferred the baseball field to remain as green space in its current location. This preference remains a core design driver. The baseball field is imagined as a multiuse space for recreation, events, and gatherings. A sidewalk arcs around the outfield with opportunities for active and passive recreation, creating connectivity between the southern end of the park, the community center, and Fairmount Pool. Trees are planted along the walk to increase the urban tree canopy, provide shade and shelter and delineate the baseball field. Re-use of onsite timber is proposed for a playful seating opportunity.

Additional amenities proposed include a playground connected to indoor play opportunities, an outdoor fitness equipment station, and picnic lawns for small gatherings. A front entry plaza welcomes visitors with bicycle parking and flexible space for pop up events. A drive aisle and parking lot connects two sections of U Street. ADA access to the site is provided with new curb cuts from the parking area and a bioretention rain garden treats stormwater along the new sidewalk.

Construction Program:

The building will stand 3 stories tall at 44 ft. In this urban setting, reducing the footprint of the building by expanding vertically will allow the residents more access to site amenities like fields, gardens and paths, as well as capture sweeping views of the city skyline. The community center seeks to achieve a LEED Silver designation. Programmatically, and as requested by area residents, the community center will feature an indoor basketball court with a second level mezzanine track wrapping the perimeter. The first level will also include offices for city administration services, security, numerous flex spaces to be used for various purposes, bathrooms, and an indoor play area. The second level will feature multiple multipurpose rooms and youth and teen spaces. The 3rd level will offer residents a culinary learning center, with direct access to a roof terrace and garden. The site will include major upgrades including the connection of U street, allowing off street parking, as well as paths, gardens, sports courts and plazas centered around a preserved historic Lucks Field.

Construction Timeline:

Construction is planned to be 16 months, set to begin in August of 2023 with a goal of completion by December 2024. As outlined by the American Rescue Plan, funds need to be encumbered by 2025.