




Staff Report  
City of Richmond, Virginia  
**Planning Commission**



UDC 2023-12	FINAL Location, Character, Extent Review	Meeting Date: 6/20/2023
<b>Applicant/Petitioner</b>	Shelly Barrick Parsons, Capital Trees (in partnership with PRCF)	
<b>Project Description</b>	FINAL Location, Character, and Extent review to expand and enhance green space at Hotchkiss Park, located at 715 E Brookland Park Boulevard	
<b>Project Location</b>		
<b>Address:</b> 715 E Brookland Park Boulevard		
<b>Property Owner:</b> CITY OF RICHMOND RECREATION & PARKS		
<b>High-Level Details:</b> 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.		
<b>UDC Recommendation</b>	Approval with Conditions	
<b>Staff Contact</b>	Ray Roakes, Planner, raymond.roakes@rva.gov	
<b>Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews</b>	Multiple community engagement events in 2021 to determine future of community center	
<b>Conditions for Approval</b>	<p>The UDC recommends that outdoor lighting be sensitive to light pollution or dark-skies compliant.</p> <p>The UDC recommends inclusion of permeable hardscape materials where appropriate and as suggested by the Urban Design Guidelines.</p> <p>The UDC recommends that the re-use of existing materials onsite should be incorporated with the design plans, where feasible.</p> <p>The UDC recommends that the Applicant amend plans to provide location for trash receptacles with lid covers, to be approved by Staff.</p>	

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## 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> <hr/> <p>Staff recommended 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> <p>The UDC recommends approval with the Staff recommended conditions and one additional conditions. UDC members discussed providing lids on trash cans and providing further lighting for safety reasons.</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>		
	<p><i>(P.9) Environment, Public Parks: 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></p>	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 do 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 decrease stormwater runoff are strongly encouraged.</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 edict, and reduce stormwater runoff.
	<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.