



**City of Richmond, Virginia**  
**Department of Planning and Development Review**  
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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: April 20, 2015  
RE: **Final Location, Character and Extent Review of the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at 3502 N. Hopkins Road**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Dexter Goode, Dept. of Public Works

**II. LOCATION**

3502 N. Hopkins Road

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for final Location, Character and Extent review of the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at 3502 N. Hopkins Road for the relocation of Department of Public Works Traffic Signal/Sign shop and Radio shop operations to the site.

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

This project involves the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at a City-owned complex at 3502 N. Hopkins Road. This is a part of the ongoing efforts to relocate City operations currently located at the Parker Field/Boulevard site to allow for the redevelopment of the area. The Radio Shop and Traffic Signal/Sign Shop operations of the Department of Public Works will be moved to the subject property.

Though there have been slight modifications to the plans from conceptual review due to budget concerns, the Urban Design Committee continues to find that the proposed buildings will complement the existing buildings on the site, and that the building materials are structurally durable and low maintenance. The Committee notes that the overall property is not widely visited by the citizenry, and the proposed buildings will not contain public-facing functions.

The Committee finds that the final plans are consistent with the recommendations made during conceptual review. The Committee further finds that the proposal is consistent with the recommendations of the Urban Design Guidelines and with the zoning and Master Plan Land Use designations for industrial uses for the site. Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant final approval as submitted.

**Staff Contact:**

Jeff Eastman, (804) 646-6348

## **V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

The subject property is located on the east side of N. Hopkins Road between Jefferson Davis Highway and Cofer Road, across the street from Mt. Olivet Cemetery, another City-owned facility. The M-2 (Heavy Industrial) zoned property totals 19.58 acres of land and is improved with a number of buildings housing the Richmond Transfer Station, Department of Public Works Inspections Department, and an existing office/garage building. The majority of the site is paved and developed. There is an area of trees to the north of the proposed Radio Shop expansion, adjacent to N. Hopkins Road.

The surrounding properties on the east side of N. Hopkins Road are also zoned M-2 while the properties on the west side of N. Hopkins Road are zoned M-1 (Light Industrial). Both sides of the corridor are improved with warehouses and manufacturing facilities, with the exception of Mt. Olivet and Maury Cemeteries.

### **b. Scope of Review**

The proposed building and site plan are subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as a public buildings.

### **c. UDC Review History**

In March 2015 the UDC reviewed and the Planning Commission approved the conceptual plans for this project, with the following conditions:

- That the final plans include a landscaping plan, showing plant species, quantity, location and size at the time of installation.
- That the applicant considers planting an allee of trees in the planting strips on either side of the central corridor of the site.
- That the final plans include a lighting plan, showing make, model and finish for any light pole and fixture, as well as fixture light source and color temperature.
- That the outdoor employee break area adjacent to the Traffic Signal/Sign Shop building be located in a landscaped area (either planted or taking advantage of existing vegetation).
- That a similar outdoor employee break area be located adjacent to the Radio shop.
- That the applicant considers providing wayfinding signage internal to the site to direct visitors to the various buildings on the site.

### **d. Project Description**

This project involves the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at 3502 N. Hopkins Road. This is a part of the ongoing efforts to relocate City operations currently located at the Parker Field/Boulevard site to allow for the redevelopment of the area. The Radio Shop and Traffic Signal/Sign Shop operations of the Department of Public Works will be moved to the subject property.

The majority of the project site is already paved and developed. The Radio Shop portion of the project entails the expansion of an existing building, while the proposed Traffic Signal/Sign Shop building will be constructed on an area that currently contains surface parking and a vacant fueling station. Only the canopy and a small shed remain of the fueling station and these structures will be

demolished with this project. The site will be designed to meet runoff volume control and quality requirements under the 2014 Department of Environmental Quality regulations and the City of Richmond Stormwater Management Design and Construction Standards Manual.

At the request of the UDC, the applicant considered the possibility of planting an allee of trees in the planting strips on either side of the central corridor of the site. Unfortunately, the site is not conducive to the planting of shade trees due to overhead power lines and underground gas lines along the eastern side of the road and an underground sanitary sewer line on the western side. Instead, the plans propose planting these strips with crepe myrtles, generally spaced 20' on center.

Four freestanding light poles are included on the site: three on the Building 4 portion of the project and one in the rear of Building 3 over the employee break area. The freestanding lights will be Spaulding Lighting's Cimarron LED fixtures atop 25' tall square poles. In addition to freestanding lights, there will be Spaulding TRP LED wall-mounted lighting fixtures to light the areas adjacent to the buildings. Both fixtures will contain lights with a color temperature of 3000k, and will be full cut-off.

In response to the recommendations made during conceptual review, the applicant has added two wayfinding signs to the site.

This project and the Commerce Road Complex project (also under consideration by the UDC in March 2015) are considered one project in the City budget. The total construction budget for both projects is estimated to be \$8 million. Construction is slated to commence in June 2015, with relocation of operations and occupancy of the new facilities scheduled to occur in December 2015. Below are details for each proposed building:

#### **Radio Shop Building (building #3 on plans)**

The building that will be the home of the Radio Shop currently contains 18,000 square feet and will undergo interior renovation as part of the project. The proposed expansion would add about 6,500 square feet onto the existing building on the N. Hopkins Road façade. The existing building is a pre-engineered metal building composed of beige metal panels with overhead doors for vehicle bays. The vehicle bays of the building will be utilized with the proposed use and, therefore, will not require modification. Damaged portions of the metal panel siding on the existing building will be replaced. The new addition will be a pre-engineered structure with beige metal panels to match the existing building. During conceptual review, the addition was to contain a split-face CMU base, but due to budget concerns, this base has been removed.

The expansion will provide space for offices, a break room, a conference room, restrooms and a locker room. Windows are provided along each of the three sides of the addition. There are two offices in the addition that are not along an exterior wall, and these offices will each have access to natural light by way of two skylights. Three offices will be provided in the existing building alongside the new addition. One of these offices has windows along the exterior wall, and the other two offices have windows that look out into the work space, where natural light is provided by exterior windows and translucent ceiling panels. The

customer entrance (customers are City employees who operate fleet vehicles) to the building features double-doors flanked by full height windows, while the employee entrance contains a single door. Both doorways are protected by a metal canopy. The roof of the addition will now have a dual slope to match the existing building; at conceptual phase it was proposed to be a single slope roof.

An employee break area will be provided adjacent to the expansion and along the existing tree line, which will not be modified. The break area will be additionally landscaped with two red maple trees and ten northern bayberry shrubs and will also be lighted.

The area around this building is currently fenced and gated and will remain so. Parking for this building will be provided in the existing paved parking areas in the vicinity. The only proposed modification to the parking area is that they will provide four landscaped islands to break up the large expanses of asphalt. Two of the islands will contain a Japanese Zelkova tree, two will contain a red maple tree, and each will be underplanted with five knock-out rose bushes.

#### **Traffic Signal/Sign Shop Building (building #4 on plans)**

The new building for the traffic signal/sign shop will be approximately 29,150 square feet and will provide space for offices, a fabrication shop, storage, a break room, a conference room, restrooms and a locker room. This is a pre-engineered metal building consisting of a high bay section for vehicle bays and warehousing, and a lower portion for the office area. Windows are provided along each of the facades of the building. High windows provided above the low office roof will provide daylight into the warehouse fabrication areas. The main and office entrances will face towards N. Hopkins Road, and the main entrance will feature double-doors flanked by full height windows, all protected by a metal canopy. The exterior of the new building will be composed of beige metal panels to match the Radio Shop and to complement other buildings on the site. During conceptual review, the new building was to contain a split-face CMU base on each façade. Due to budget concerns, this base has been removed on the warehouse portion of the building but still remains on the office portion.

The area around this building will be fenced and gated with chain-link and will provide outdoor storage for traffic signals and signs. Two underground stormwater management tanks will be provided to the west of the proposed building. Parking will be provided in the vicinity of the building and the passenger parking spaces will be composed of porous pavement. Several landscaped islands are provided to break up the expanses of asphalt and will be planted in the same palette as the rest of the project area (Japanese Zelkova trees, red maple trees, northern bayberry shrubs and knock-out rose bushes).

An employee break area will be provided adjacent to the expansion and along the existing tree line, which will not be modified. The break area will be additionally landscaped with one red maple tree and ten northern bayberry shrubs and will also be lighted.

#### **e. Master Plan**

The subject properties are located within the Old South planning district as defined by the citywide Master Plan. The Master Plan recommends Industrial uses for this property, and defines the primary uses in this land use category as a

wide variety of manufacturing, processing, research and development, warehousing, distribution, office-warehouse and service uses (page 135). There is no language in the plan specific to the subject properties or the proposed improvements.

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

In general, the Urban Design Guidelines note that “the quality, design, and condition of all public facilities sets the image of the City, and sends a message about the values placed upon the services provided” (page 13). More specifically, the Guidelines state that “a building’s entrance should be easily recognizable (page 13). The Guidelines also note that building materials “should be appropriate for the size and architectural style of the building” and that “many different materials on a single building lead to visual confusion and should be avoided” (page 17). Building materials should also be “aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require little maintenance” (page 17).

The subsection on materials continues to say that “building textures and their combinations should add continuity and not conflict or detract from each other” and that “textures should be appropriate for the size, proportion and architectural style of the building and its surroundings” (page 17). Referring to building colors, that Guidelines note that they “should be coordinated and compatible with each other and with adjacent buildings” (page 17). The Guidelines also state that “windows, projecting cornices, and architectural details, such as decorative masonry bands in an accent color, may be used to break up flat building planes” (page 19).

The Guidelines note that landscape plans should “include diverse plant species, including evergreen, flowering and shade tree species combined with shrubs, ground covers and annual and perennial plantings” and that “shade trees for pedestrian comfort should be the predominant plant material in an urban setting” (page 10).

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**