



To: Urban Design Committee
From: Planning and Preservation Division
Date: September 6, 2018
RE: **Final review of streetscape encroachments and improvements for The Sauer Center, 2000-2220 W. Broad Street; UDC 2018-36**

I. APPLICANT

Ricky Gorrell, HG Design Studio representing Sauer Properties, Inc.

II. LOCATION

The streetscape public right-of-way along 2000-2220 W. Broad Street

Property Owner:

City of Richmond right-of-way; Sauer Properties, Inc. will retain ownership of the improvements

III. PURPOSE

The application is for the final review of streetscape encroachments and improvements into the City right-of-way

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the project does a commendable job of improving this section of streetscape while maintaining a balance of existing and new landscaping while maintaining effective sidewalk width for both movement and programming. The use of hardscape materials to denote commercial entrances, outdoor seating, and streetscape furnishings further illustrate the thoughtful consideration that went into the design to further provide visual interest and overall enhancement of the public realm.

Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Director of Public Works grant approval of the encroachment request.

Staff Contact:

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The subject right-of-way (ROW) is located on along 2000-2220 W. Broad Street, part of the Sauer Center project currently under construction. The ROW spans an area currently zoned: M-1, Light Industrial; B-3, Central Business District; and B-4 Central Business District. The site is bordered on the south by W. Broad Street which consists of a seven lane road. Abutting the subject ROW are two west bound traffic lanes, with a posted speed limit of 35 mph; adjacent to the traffic lanes are two Bus Rapid Transit lanes, east bound and west bound; followed by two east bound traffic lanes with a similar posted speed limit of 35 mph; and a parking lane that abuts the southern side of W. Broad Street. The southern side of W. Broad Street is zoned UB-PO4, Urban Business-Parking Overlay that is lined with mixed-

use buildings. South of W. Broad is the dense, walkable, Fan neighborhood, located about 400 ft. away.

The Sauer Center borders the subject ROW to the north, more specifically, the headquarters office for the CF Sauer Company (under renovation), Wholefoods Market (under construction), off-street parking for the center, Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken (proposed for renovation), and the Putney Building (currently vacant), along with several curb cuts for vehicular access.

b. Scope of Review

The City owns the ROW, but Sauer Properties, Inc. will perform all of the work and will be responsible for all of the maintenance, which puts the improvements in the category of encroachments.

The project encroachments include: a permanent outdoor dining railing, metal canopies, signage, and external door swings. The encroachment process is administered through the Department of Public Works, which has requested that the Urban Design Committee (UDC) provide design advice on certain types of encroachments. The UDC does not have the authority to approve encroachments, but rather provides advice to the Department of Public Works.

c. Project Description

With redevelopment of the 20-acre portion of The Sauer Center site, located on the north side of the 2000 block of W. Broad Street between N. Meadow Street and Allison Street, the sidewalk north of W. Broad Street needed repair and a new functional design to encourage pedestrian activity and to upgrade the streetscape appeal related to the development. With most street trees currently missing, portions of the sidewalk in poor condition, required movement of street light poles, pedestrian lighting below desirable levels, existing curb flush with the asphalt driving lanes, a redesign of the streetscape was critical to reflect the first-class development intentions of The Sauer Center.

The streetscape design will be the front door to The Sauer Center. This development will also draw new pedestrian activity and for those reasons the design makes extensive use of quality materials such as brick, granite tree well curbing, new site furniture, and new pedestrian lighting. Sustainable items incorporated into the streetscape design include larger than usual 6'x18' tree wells, electric car charging stations, and solar panels (extensively used on roof tops and carports within The Sauer Center site outside of the right of way). The large tree wells are designed to provide more space for tree root development, hence providing for the longevity of the street trees.

The pavers incorporate patterns that help define the site furnishings zone, walking zone, potential outdoor dining zone, and call attention to the special building entrances. Brick pavers have been used to create a 'site furnishings' zone along the curb for tree wells, benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, and more. Brick pavers have also been used at special entrances in front of the Putney building (formerly Department of Taxation), and the Whole Foods Broad Street entrance and outdoor dining area (under roof). Natural gray scored concrete has been incorporated to create visual interest in the walkways.

LED in-ground up-lights are being used to light the building facades starting with The CF Sauer Company headquarter building and working west to the end of the development at the Putney building. The intent is to accentuate the development at night much in the same fashion as the buildings have been lit up on Main Street in the Fan district between N. Morris and N. Harvie Streets (Uptown) by the developer in the last part of the 20th century.

d. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to identify any prior projects involving this property and ROW. The UDC frequently reviews encroachments.

e. Master Plan

This project falls within the Near West District of the Master Plan. It mentions expected changes and trends will occur specifically on major transportation and commercial corridors, particularly Broad Street, where there will be more of a focus on retailing and commercial services (page 228).

Regarding W. Broad St. between Belvidere St. and Boulevard, the plan further states that “Community commercial, institutional, governmental, and office uses are all appropriate and should continue. Vacant buildings on the corridor should be encouraged to develop first floor commercial uses with office and/or residential uses for upper floors. Ideally, Broad Street should be a dense urban development that is oriented to the pedestrian and compatible with adjacent residential development. Therefore, any new development along this section of Broad Street needs to be oriented to the street with no setbacks, and to complement the prevailing urban storefront character. Additional off-street parking should be developed with minimal visual impact on the corridor. Vehicle-oriented land uses and driveways that could impede the flow of pedestrian traffic should be discouraged. Existing auto-related...uses should be gradually phased out along the corridor.” (page 239).

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Community Character section of the Urban Design Guidelines contains several suggestions on landscaping, noting that “generally, new street trees should be located a minimum of 35’ from each other and three feet from the curb” and that “generally, a street tree should be no closer than 12 feet from a streetlight” (page 21). “Entrances and pedestrian walkways should enhance the streetscape and delineate an edge between pedestrian walkways and the street. Appropriate landscaping should be used to clearly define entrances and pedestrian walkways” (page 20).

“Site furnishings should be conveniently located for the pedestrian, but should not obstruct pedestrian circulation. Furnishings should be located where people congregate, such as at bus stops, in front of major attractions, and in parks and plazas. The placement of furnishings should not create visual clutter on the streetscape. Furnishings may be grouped together, where appropriate. However, trash receptacles should be placed in the vicinity of bench groupings, but not directly adjacent, because of wasps and other insects in summer months.” (page 25).

The Guidelines also encourage alternatives to metal tree grates, unless a precedent has been established in the area (page 21). Finally, the Guidelines

state that lighting and street fixtures should be consistent with the existing fixtures in the surrounding area and that pedestrian light poles should be placed 40 to 60 feet apart (page 22, 25).

Regarding door swings, the Guidelines state “The Urban Design Committee does not support the encroachment of door swings into the public right-of-way. Recessed entries are encouraged. When a recessed entry is not feasible, the encroachment of the door swing into the public right-of-way should be minimized as much as possible.” (page 28).

The Guidelines have this to say about outdoor dining “Outdoor dining facilities that encroach into the public right-of-way should only be considered when there is adequate sidewalk width to accommodate both the dining facilities and the pedestrian” (page 29). Also, “the outdoor dining furnishings should reflect the character of the restaurant while respecting the spirit of the street design.” (29).

VII. ATTACHMENTS

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