



City of Richmond, Virginia
Department of Planning and Development Review
City Hall, Richmond, Virginia 23219
804.646.6335 (f) 804.646.5789 www.richmondgov.com

To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: November 19, 2018
RE: **Final Section 17.05 and location, character and extent review of replacement bridge, 111 and 115 Hull Street; UDC 2018-40**

I. APPLICANT

Lory Markham, Markham Planning

II. LOCATION

111 and 115 Hull Street

Property Owner:

City of Richmond Public Works

III. PURPOSE

The application is for Section 17.05 and final location, character and extent review of a replacement bridge that will be constructed by the applicant then conveyed to the City per a development agreement (ORD. 2016-252).

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This project involves replacing an existing city bridge that is no longer structurally sound. The new bridge will allow vehicular access to a property that will retain a new mixed-use development. Due to site constraints, the new bridge will be constructed closer to Hull Street. The proposed bridge is a precast concrete structure with two vehicular travel lanes and a sidewalk on one side.

The new bridge will be paid for and constructed by the development team as part of a development agreement approved by City Council in 2016 via ORD. 2016-252.

Staff finds the proposal meets the requirements of DPU and DPW. Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant final approval as submitted.

Staff Contact:

Josh Son, (804) 646-3741 // joshua.son@richmondgov.com

V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The proposed bridge spans the canal in an area that is bound by an existing building to the north (a former paper mill), Hull Street on the east, an existing asphalt parking lot on the south, and an existing pedestrian bridge to the west. The proposed bridge falls within an area that is zoned RF-1 (Riverfront District) but abuts an area zoned B-4 (Central Business District) to the north and B-7 (Mixed-Use Business District) to the south.

The new proposed bridge is part of a larger plan of development that may see the development of two towers for the 3.74 acre site. A plan of development has been filed for a 14-story mixed-use structure.

b. Scope of Review

This application is a result of a development agreement that was approved by City Council in 2016 via ordinance 2016-252. This development agreement specifies the type and design of the bridge that is to be constructed, yet this project is still subject to Section 17.05 of the City Charter that states the commission is “to consider and suggest the design of... bridges” as it will become the property of the city.

Additionally, this project is subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter as a “public way”.

c. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to identify any previously reviewed UDC projects for the subject property.

d. Project Description

The proposed bridge will serve as the primary access to the property located between the floodwall and the canal north of Hull Street. The bridge will replace an existing City bridge that has been poorly maintained and is unsafe for vehicular traffic. Currently, the property has no direct public vehicular access and there is limited access for City crews to access the property to inspect and maintain the floodwall.

The existing pedestrian bridge that provides access to the floodwall walk would remain unchanged while the existing vehicular bridge would be removed. The proposed replacement bridge would be relocated closer to Hull Street due to existing site constraints, including overhead transmission lines. This new location will allow for a single-span bridge structure verse the current two-span structure. This will provide increased hydraulic opening at crossing and remove potential impact to the combined sewer system located along the canal center.

The proposed bridge is a precast concrete structure with two vehicular travel lanes and a sidewalk on one side. This design is appropriate as determined by the Department of Public Works after over two years of meetings and review of the proposal.

The bridge is being paid for and constructed by the development team proposing to develop the property that the bridge will access. This is a result of a development agreement that was approved by City Council in 2016 via ordinance 2016-252. This development agreement specifies the type and design of the bridge that is to be constructed and provides the approval process for the developer and the Department of Public Works. Once construction is completed on the bridge it will be conveyed to the City per the development agreement.

The estimated construction start date will be before the end of the year pending all City approvals.

e. Master Plan

Richmond's Riverfront Plan, adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2012, anticipates incremental redevelopment of under-utilized parcels and languishing former industrial sites. The plan states that "development strategies should favor mixed-use, with an emphasis on street level retail, where appropriate. The fundamental emphasis of redevelopment along the Riverfront is to intensify pedestrian activity at street level through infill development with sufficient density to be an attractor and destination of activity. Greater density reinforces urban character, provides for an increase in pedestrian activity, resulting in a safer and more vibrant city. Each redevelopment project will be subject to the existing public process and review to assess and enforce massing and detailing complementary to the Riverfront. The architectural expression of new infill development should reference the rich historic context of the Richmond Riverfront, speaking to the present without discarding the past, creating the next generation of landmark structures and neighborhood places" (Page 11).

It further states that "the fundamental objective of the Riverfront Plan in this development is to maximize public passage through and between the new and adapted structures, reinforcing the perception of this area as a fully integrated, and publically-accessible mixed-use district rather than a self-contained enclave. Detailing the Reynolds South streetscape through a combination of public and private funding needs will ensure continuity of vocabulary from Commerce Avenue and Hull Street to the floodwall. This is particularly important where multi-story parking structures are to be configured, and elevated streets and pedestrian bridges are anticipated; one or more spans will need to extend to and connect with the existing Manchester Floodwall Walk" (Page 44).

The plan calls out this parcel specifically stating that "the former Federal Paper Board Co., upriver of the Mayo Bridge, is in the process of conversion to ...residential units...Once...properties are adapted to post-industrial use, they will take advantage of spectacular river views from above the floodwall" (Page 44).

f. Urban Design Guidelines

It is the priority of the Urban Design Committee to give deference to pedestrians over other modes of travel. Both public transit and non-motorized transportation (walking, biking, etc.) should be considered in the design and planning of all projects.

Although the Urban Design Guidelines does not focus much on the design of bridges, it does provide a general guide on lane widths. It's noted that "the width of a street should respond to the volume of traffic it carries. Streets classified as local and collector should generally have widths that are narrower than arterial roadways. The provision of on-street parking, bike lanes, or traffic calming measures may impact the amount of pavement from curb to curb, but the lane widths on local and collector streets should be between 9 and 10 feet. These lane widths may also be appropriate for some arterial streets, depending on the function. Greater lane widths could be considered on local streets in instances where a queuing design is used and the travel lane is shared. An 11 foot travel lane should only be utilized along corridors designed for speeds in excess of 40 mph" (Page 6).

VII. ATTACHMENTS

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