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To: Urban Design Committee  
From: Planning and Preservation Division  
Date: September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
RE: **Review of a seating wall encroachment, northwest corner of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue; UDC 2020-14**

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**I. APPLICANT**

David Lydiard, President – Bellevue Civic Association

**II. LOCATION**

The public right-of-way at the northwest corner of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue.

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond right-of-way (ROW)

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for the review of a seating wall encroachment

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The Bellevue Civic Association is proposing to construct a seating wall at the northwest corner of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue, a location that is located within the Bellevue neighborhood in Richmond's Northside. This project proposes to transform an underutilized portion of a public right-of-way into an attractive and activated space that residents and visitors can enjoy.

It is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Director of Public Works grant approval of the encroachment request with the following conditions:

- A Maintenance Agreement between the City of Richmond and the Bellevue Civic Association be finalized and adopted by City Council before work begins on the project.
- To better understand the extent of the encroachment, a site plan showing more specific measurements of the hardscape and seating wall and the project's relation to the neighboring private property be submitted to the Department of Public Works before work begins.
- Applicant consider the feasibility of including pervious pavers, or an installation method of the impervious pavers that allows for water infiltration into the project design.

**Staff Contact:**

Alex Dandridge // (804) 646-6569 // [alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com](mailto:alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com)

## **V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

The subject ROW is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue. This intersection is an unsignalized four-way stop. It is located within an area zoned R-4 Residential. Bellevue Avenue is a striped, two-way road with a posted speed limit of 25 mph, and Fauquier Avenue is a two-way road, separated by a median south of Bellevue Avenue, and has a posted speed limit of 25 mph. The subject right-of-way is in the heart of a residential area, and in close proximity to two commercial areas, one being along Bellevue Avenue, and the other being along MacArthur Avenue.

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

The City owns the ROW, but the Bellevue Civic Association will be hiring a landscape contractor to perform the work, which puts the improvements in the category of encroachments.

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. UDC Review History**

Although there have not been any previous projects reviewed at the subject right-of-way, the Urban Design Committee reviewed and recommended approval of the Bellevue Neighborhood sign in October 2006. This sign is located at the intersection of Fauquier Avenue and Brook Road.

### **d. Project Description**

Bellevue is a neighborhood in Richmond's Northside composed of over 1,240 homes and a network of sidewalks. The Bellevue Civic Association is proposing to construct a seating wall at the northwest corner of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue.

This location is positioned in the middle of the neighborhood at a 4-way stop. This project proposes to transform this underutilized public right-of-way into an attractive spot where passersby can stop and sit. Existing conditions show there is an informal foot path across the site, demonstrating the natural movement of pedestrians cutting across from Fauquier Avenue and onto the sidewalk along Bellevue Avenue. There are

two signs, a stop sign and a street sign, located on the corner. The signs will not be impacted or obstructed by the project.

The hardscape will be professionally installed by My New Project, LLC, owned by Victor Ayala, who has performed numerous projects in Bellevue. Pete Rose will be supplying the NewLine paver materials. The proposed hardscape will follow the sidewalk on the south side and then curve around the curb and follow the Fauquier curb with an offset for a possible sidewalk installation in the future. From the point of the corner the hardscape will go back 20' and feature a 21" curved seating wall composed of pavers and a bull-nose cap along the western edge of the hardscape. The applicant has provided a site plan for the proposed seating wall and hardscape. Staff recommends that specific measurements be added to this drawing, or additional drawings be submitted to Staff that include specific measurements before work begins. Specific measurements of the site will help to further explain the extent of the encroachment and its relation to the neighboring private property.

The hardscape design will utilize Fieldstone, gray colored pavers that are six by nine by three inches in size with a granite colored border. The 21" sitting wall will utilize six-inch and three-inch blocks with split face in a random pattern. The top will use Fieldstone, gray colored caps with a bullnose edge. The stones will be laid and held together by poly sand, a mix of fine sand and polymer additives. Upon proper installation, the polymers will activate and bind together inside the paver joints.

There are no plans for landscaping, as pavers will cover the site. The Bellevue Civic Association will be responsible for maintenance of the project, to include spraying for weed control if necessary. The Bellevue Civic Association is working with the City of Richmond to create a Maintenance Agreement which will turn over all maintenance from the City to the Bellevue Civic Association. This Maintenance Agreement is scheduled to be introduced to the City Council on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

There are no plans for additional lighting or other site improvements at this time.

**e. Master Plan**

The subject right-of-way is located in the North Planning District as defined by the City of Richmond's Master Plan. Although the Master Plan does not mention specific park spaces within the Bellevue Neighborhood, it is recognized in the plan that very little vacant land exists in the North Planning District, most being either built out or already designated as a park, and that new open park space should be provided where appropriate.

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Urban Design Guidelines state that “simpler paving designs are more compatible with diverse building styles and better unify the various design elements found on City streets. The color of brick and concrete pavers should coordinate with building architecture and adjacent streetscape pavements” (pg. 20), and that “the design of walls or fences and screening should be consistent with the design, materials, colors and textures of the adjacent buildings” (pg. 25). Staff finds that the proposed materials are neutral in color and simple in design, and will not impact the visual characteristics of the surrounding residential block. The proposed stone and color for this project are similar in visual characteristics to the materials used in the original Bellevue Arch on Hermitage Road and Pope Avenue, as well as the newer Bellevue Neighborhood sign on Fauquier Avenue and Brook Road.

The Guidelines emphasize that impervious materials should be minimized within the scope of proposed projects. As submitted, the current design of the hardscape will utilize impervious pavers over a footprint of approximately 200 square feet. If feasible, staff recommends that the applicant consider utilizing pervious pavers, or an installation method that allows for the absorption of water on site.

**VI. ATTACHMENTS**

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