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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
RE: **Conceptual location, character, and extent review sidewalk and drainage improvements on Whitehead Road; between Greenbank Road and Daytona Drive UDC 2021-17**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Bill Boston, Department of Public Utilities

**II. LOCATION**

Whitehead Road between Greenbank Road and Daytona Drive

**Property Owner:**

Right-of-way adjacent to Whitehead Road

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for the conceptual review of the construction of right-of-way improvements, consisting mostly of drainage and the addition of sidewalks, along the north and south sides of Whitehead Road from Greenbank Road to Daytona Drive.

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The conceptual plan seeks to improve the corridor for those who walk and drive along Whitehead Road. The conceptual plan will address ongoing flooding on Whitehead Road by replacing the existing culverts that convey Pocosham Creek underneath Whitehead road with larger culverts, and by raising the road approximately 1 foot.

The Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the conceptual design with the following conditions for final review:

- "Ladder" striped crosswalk design be utilized at all pedestrian crossings, including Derwent Drive and Daytona Drive.

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**V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

**a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

The subject improvements are proposed along Whitehead Street, a distance of approximately 0.23 miles. Land use along the corridor is mostly R-3 (Single-family residential). Currently there is one lane in each direction along the entire segment of the project with a posted speed limit of 35 mph. There are occasional turn lanes and intersections with neighborhood roads. This portion of Whitehead Road is surrounded by a wooded area. There are currently no sidewalks, but roadside ditches flank the road.

**b. Scope of Review**

The project is subject to location, character, and extent review as part of a “widening, extension, narrowing, enlargement, vacation or change in the use of streets and other public ways” under Section 17.07 of the City Charter.

**c. UDC Review History**

The Urban Design Committee has not previously reviewed projects at this location.

**d. Project Description**

The Whitehead Road Culvert Replacement and Sidewalk Improvement project was initiated to resolve the frequent flooding of Whitehead Road at the crossing of Pocosham Creek, and the lack of designated pedestrian amenities along the roadway.

The existing 36” culverts which convey Pocosham Creek under Whitehead Road are undersized and the roadway frequently floods. The FEMA Flood Insurance Study (FIS) indicates that Whitehead Road overtops during storm events equal to and greater than 10-year storm events. The existing culverts will be replaced with a triple 8’x6’ concrete box culvert, and Whitehead Road will be raised by approximately one foot within the vicinity of the stream crossing.

The existing roadway has minimal room for pedestrians to walk, including children who utilize Whitehead Road for access to and from G.H. Reid Elementary School. New sidewalk, curb, and gutter will be constructed along both sides of the 1,200-linear-foot section of Whitehead Road from Greenbank Road to Daytona Drive. New accessible ramps and crosswalk striping will be provided at the beginning and end points of the project.

Whitehead Road has narrow travel lanes and steep dropoffs immediately adjacent to the pavement. The narrow lanes and shoulder conditions are hazardous to vehicles. The proposed improvements will provide a 21’ wide travel way (10.5’ wide lanes) plus the addition of city standard curbing with 18” wide concrete gutter pans.

Approximately 0.18 acres of wetland impacts will occur as part of the project, due to the improvements within the vicinity of the stream crossing. A United States Army Corps of Engineers joint permit application has been submitted to obtain authorization for these impacts, with mitigation planned to be in the form of wetland credits to be purchased by the City. No presence of historical or cultural resources were identified as part of the joint permit application process. Nutrient credits will be purchased to satisfy stormwater management permit requirements. A Resource Protection Area (RPA) planting plan will be included in the final construction drawings to reestablish impacted trees within select areas within the City-designated RPA area.

The existing properties along the roadway consist of a mixture of single-family homes, vacant lots, and the Residences at Brookside apartment complex. Of the eighteen (18) private properties adjacent to the roadway within the project limits, fourteen (14) require right of way and/or public and private easement acquisition prior to project construction. All property owners have been notified of the project

through various mailings and phone calls, and site meetings have been held with several owners to date. Owner outreach will continue up until and throughout the property acquisition phase. Right of way and public and private easement plats have been developed for all properties and submitted to the City Attorney for review.

This project has been through multiple plan reviews by the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Utilities in 2019 and 2020. Final plans are expected to be completed and approved in 2021.

**e. Master Plan**

The Richmond 300 Master Plan does not speak to Whitehead Road specifically, but does speak to the overall goal of increasing pedestrian safety and ADA accessibility within the City of Richmond, creating streets that are safe for all potential users.

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Guidelines note that *“intersections should be designed to serve pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists in a safe manner”* (page 7). The scope of work calls for the construction of new 5-foot sidewalks on either side of Whitehead Road, as well as crosswalks at all major intersections. Staff recommends that the “ladder” striped crosswalk design be utilized in all proposed crosswalk locations, as this design is more visible than the “parallel lines” striped crosswalk design.

**VI. ATTACHMENTS**

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