

Parker Harding Redevelopment Narrative

The Public Works Department is proposing to redevelop Parker Harding Plaza through our “Reconnect the Riverfront” initiative. In its present state, there are many deficiencies that we are proposing to address, including but not limited to the following:

ADA Compliance

Fire Code/Fire Access

Pedestrian safety and visibility

Poor circulation and traffic flow

Lack of any flood mitigation

Lack of any sustainability measures

Limited Landscaping and green space

Substandard parking and travel lane dimensions for most of the parking spaces

And most importantly, very limited Riverfront access for residents and visitors alike, instead giving priority to vehicles, parking, and roadway.

The site sits fully within the Village District Overlay, (VDO), zone and as such must meet the VDO standards. It is the intent to address all of the above deficiencies as well as to comply with the VDO Design Principles and Design Standards.

There are no buildings being modified under this project so our compliance speaks mainly to pavers, pavement treatment, parking, landscaping, lighting, rain gardens, and waterfront treatments.

Pavers: The project proposes to utilize the Westport standard Whitaker-Greer pavers that have been utilized throughout the downtown area, along building frontages and in walkways leading from the buildings to the waterfront.

Pavement treatment: Where the walkways transition to decorative crosswalks crossing the parking area or roadways, the crosswalks will utilize the stamped thermoplastic inlay material that we have used on crosswalks on Main Street and Elm Street. The material is called TrafficScape, made by Ennis-Flint of Thomasville, NC. The color is “Sienna” and is consistent with the color of the above-mentioned Whitaker-Greer Brick. The use of this material is specifically indicated as its coefficient of thermal expansion is similar to that of asphalt, so that cracking in the underlying pavement due to differential expansion or contraction will not occur, making it more sustainable over the long term. The material is extremely durable, lasting approximately 10 years or more under traffic conditions.

The rest of the paved parking areas will be conventional asphalt pavement.

Parking: The main parking lot is proposed to be modified from the existing conditions by creating a consistent 25-foot wide, two-way access lane between two rows of perpendicular parking. All ADA requirements and fire code requirements are met or exceeded. The parking area is separated from the

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one-way cut through road by a landscaped buffer. Pedestrian bump outs are also landscaped at the pedestrian crossings.

Landscaping: Landscaping will utilize native plants and trees throughout the project and will integrate plantings into the various rain gardens along the waterfront. A planting schedule is provided. Plantings in the rain gardens and along the waterfront will be salt-tolerant to be sustainable and recoverable after flood events. Plantings and landscaping will be utilized to define and separate the parking area, cut-through road, and waterfront area.

Local artwork will also be placed throughout the waterfront area and rotated periodically for variety. We are working with the Westport Arts council to provide appropriate spaces for different varieties of art compatible with the outdoor environment.

Lighting: The primary lighting along paved sidewalks will utilize the Lumec L80 lighting heads that are used through out Main St and the downtown area. At waterfront landings a combination of Arne Catenary fixtures and MP LO1 in-sidewalk up lights will add some variety and enhancement to the landing areas where the pedestrian walkways meet the waterfront.

Rain Gardens: Rain Gardens are utilized between the green space adjacent to the boardwalk and the cut-through road to separate the two. These will also provide an opportunity for infiltration of storm water and biotreatment of stormwater. In addition to plantings the rain garden will be lined with inlaid stone as well as random hand placed protruding stones.

Waterfront Treatments: Along the waterfront three new treatments will be introduced that will differentiate the waterfront from the parking area and roadway, but also compliment the surface treatments specified in the Design Standards. Exposed aggregate concrete will be used to transition from the concrete sidewalks that exist both North and South of the plaza, to an Ipe boardwalk that will be the main feature along the waterfront. The boardwalk will vary in width but will be no less than 13 feet wide to provide enough room for several groups of people to comfortably pass each other in both directions. Along the water side of the Boardwalk will be a 42-inch cable rail fence with an Ipe cap. The cap will be angled at 15 degrees to prevent it from becoming a drink rail, and to provide an opportunity for some interpretive placards along the walk.

We feel that the proposed plan meets or exceeds compliance with section 36-2.3.4 of the VDO regulations, and hope that the Joint committee of the ARB-HDC will give a positive recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission for the project overall.