



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2015-147: To amend Ord. No. 2013-135-131, adopted Jul. 8, 2013, which closes to public use and travel, a portion of right-of-way known as the 8th Street Connector located in the block bounded by South 8th Street, Basin Bank Street, South 9th Street and East Canal Street, consisting of 16,337± square feet, upon certain terms and conditions, to extend the time period within which the conditions of the closing must be fulfilled.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 20, 2015

PETITIONER

Department of Public Works
City of Richmond

LOCATION

A portion of right-of-way known as the 8th Street Connector located in the block bounded by South 8th Street, Basin Bank Street, South 9th Street and East Canal Street.

PURPOSE

To amend Ord. No. 2013-135-131, adopted Jul. 8, 2013, which closes to public use and travel, a portion of right-of-way known as the 8th Street Connector located in the block bounded by South 8th Street, Basin Bank Street, South 9th Street and East Canal Street, consisting of 16,337± square feet, upon certain terms and conditions, to extend the time period within which the conditions of the closing must be fulfilled.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant (CRG-Richmond, LLC) requested the closure of the above mentioned 8th Street Connector in order to consolidate the properties within the block by the requestor in order to develop a high-rise office building at this location and Council subsequently adopted Ordinance No. 2013-135-131 to do so. Ordinance No. 2013-135-131 required certain conditions be satisfied by the applicant within the 12 months of the ordinance adoption date (July 8, 2013) before the road closure and vacation takes effect. CRG-Richmond, LLC diligently pursued satisfying all conditions but, because 12 months have passed since adoption, the ordinance must be amended to extend the deadline to 28 months so that the road closure and vacation can take effect upon CRG-Richmond, LLC satisfying all conditions.

The Department of Public Works recommends adoptions of the amended ordinance.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property is located in the block bound by East Cary Street to the north, South 9th Street to the east, East Canal Street to the South and South 8th Street to the west. The 8th Street connector right-of-way currently bisects the block.

Proposed Use of the Property

A high-rise building has been recently constructed over the 8th Street connector right-of-way.

Master Plan

The City's Downtown Plan categorizes the property as part of the "Urban Core" character area. This area is characterized by high density, an intense mixed of uses, and civic buildings of regional significance (p. 3.27). Additionally, buildings are typically located on larger lots and are five or more stories in height (p. 3.27).

The Downtown Plan speaks directly to the subject properties stating, "The Manchester Bridge is a primary entrance from the south into Downtown. The bridge extends to 9th Street and currently terminates on a surface parking lot. This under-utilized property should be developed as a signature gateway building. This building should engage the pedestrian and respect the human scale. The ground floor should be dedicated to active, street-oriented uses such as office, office lobbies, hotel lobbies or shops, in order to engage pedestrians and contribute to the vitality of the street." (Page 4.27)

Furthermore, the Downtown Plan describes the signature building by stating, "It should have a clearly defined base, middle and top that relate to the function of each part of the building. For instance, the base carries the weight of the building and communicates directly with the pedestrian and the street level, the middle holds the majority of the program of the building and the top of the building and engages the skyline and can serve as an icon for viewer from far away. A high-rise building at this location, built in the tradition of great American skyscrapers, could add to Richmond' skyline." (Page 4.28)

Zoning

The subject property is located within the B-4 Central Business zoning district. The B-4 zoning district permits a mix of uses including office and commercial and parking garages subject to meeting certain feature requirements.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding properties are also zoned B-4. The site is adjacent to the a parking garage to the north, James Center to the east, Kanawha Plaza to the south, and Dominion Virginia Power to the west.

Staff Contact: Brian Copple, (804) 646-3639