



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2016-027: To declare that a public necessity exists and to authorize the acquisition of certain fee simple interests, permanent and temporary easements, and dedicated rights-of-way for the public purpose of constructing multimodal transportation and drainage improvements along Commerce Road between its intersection with Bells Road and its intersection with Bellemeade Road.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 16, 2016

PETITIONER

City of Richmond

LOCATION

Along Commerce Road from Bells Road to Bellemeade Road

PURPOSE

Improvements to this section of Commerce Road is a multimodal improvement project that is funded with VDOT (Urban) and RSTP (Regional Surface Transportation Program) funds. Additional right of way and easements are required to construct these improvements. This ordinance would authorize the City to acquire the necessary easements and property for the improvements.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Commerce Road is an urban minor arterial road serving regional traffic and the surrounding neighborhoods and the surrounding businesses. It connects Bells Road to Bellemeade road and serves as a significant industrial corridor. This project will provide a safe, multi-modal corridor for all users.

The project is funded through coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation VDOT (Urban) program. This project will provide pavement rehabilitation, drainage improvements, and railroad crossing upgrades. The improvements will consist of a center raised median with trees, left turn lanes, curb and gutter, the installation of a (5) five foot sidewalk on the west side only, streetlights, and landscaping along both sides of the road.

In addition, the project will improve both connector roads under I95, replace the Goode's Creek deficient bridge, and provide intersection improvements at the Commerce/Bellmeade intersection. The connector roads improvements will improve access to the Port of Richmond by maximizing clearance under I-95 at both the Deepwater Terminal Connector and Bells Road Connector. These improvements were approved by the Urban Design Committee and the Planning Commission at their June 2014 meetings.

In FY06 the city received funds from VDOT in the amount of \$5,908,000 for the city to administer the project. In FY14 the city transferred \$6,352,405 from the Route 5 Relocation

Project (042-294-8751) to this project to provide funding for right of way and construction. The FY15-19 CIP budgeted an additional \$1,500,000 the city received from the RRTPO (Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (formerly MPO)) in RSTP funds in FY15. The FY16-20 CIP budgeted an additional \$500,000 the city received from the RRTPO in RSTP funds in FY16. Total funding for the project is \$14,260,405.

These improvements require additional right-of-way, temporary easements and permanent easements from six (6) parcels, as part of the project. These acquisitions are shown in the attached plats prepared by (JMT) Johnson, Mirmiran and Thompson Inc. and designated as DPW Dwg. No. C-28681, sheets 1 to 6. The estimated cost of the ROW acquisition is approximately \$120,000 (costs include consultant fees) based on assessed property values. Most of the property rights needed are temporary or permanent easements. The actual acquisition cost is to be negotiated by the right-of-way Consultant, and will be set at fair market value as determined by appropriate Federal, State and local regulations. Acquisition cost is 100% reimbursable. The project construction is scheduled for fall 2016.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed acquisition.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The affected right-of-way is along Commerce Road from Bells Road to Bellemeade Road and falls within the M-1 (Light Industrial) and M-2 (Heavy Industrial) zoning districts. This section of Commerce Road parallels Interstate 95, often separated by mere feet, and offers two access points to Deepwater Terminal Road and the industrial properties along the James River, including the Port of Richmond. Due to the industrial nature of the businesses located along the corridor, including Philip Morris, and as an access point to the City's Deepwater Terminal, it is heavily traveled by tractor trailers and other heavy vehicles.

Master Plan

The subject right-of-way is located in the Broad Rock District as defined by the citywide Master Plan. The Plan places the entire area in the Industrial land use category, with primary uses including a wide variety of manufacturing, processing, research and development, warehousing, distribution, office-warehouse and service uses. The Plan goes on to state that "Industrial uses in the Broad Rock District play an important part in the economic and employment base in the City of Richmond" (page 153).

The Plan also contains a section reflecting the elements of the transportation plan as they relate to land use, with one of the proposals being to improve the underpass of I-95 at Bells Road to support truck movements (page 154). The Broad Rock District's Transportation and Roadway Improvements Map shows the continuation of the Warwick Road/Bells Road bike route under I-95.

The Plan also contains a general chapter on Transportation, which notes that "currently, much of the roadway system in the City is conducive to neither bicycle nor pedestrian

travel. Many of the City's major transportation corridors lack streetscape elements to encourage pedestrian use" (page 37) and further, that "all transportation projects should have adequate provisions to address the needs of the pedestrian in a safe and efficient manner" (page 38).

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