



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

a2015-26: To declare an intent to amend the Zoning Ordinance for the purpose of modifying the Main Street/Uptown Parking Overlay District PO-3 parking requirements.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: April 6, 2015

PETITIONER

City of Richmond
900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

LOCATION

West Main and West Cary Streets between Harrison and Meadow Streets

PURPOSE

To amend the Zoning Ordinance to make alterations to the Main Street/Uptown PO-3 parking overlay district.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This Resolution would initiate the process of revising the City's Zoning Ordinance. The proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance along with a companion ordinance that would amend the official zoning map would accomplish three objectives:

1. This ordinance amendment would remove the existing legal description for the PO-3 parking overlay district and refer to the official zoning map instead.
2. A companion ordinance would amend the official zoning map to include 39 properties that are not currently within PO-3 district boundaries.
3. This ordinance amendment would establish new parking standards for the PO-3 district based on the new district boundaries.

This area has been identified for an update to the zoning districts and the parking overlay district in order to correct inconsistencies between the official zoning map and the Zoning Ordinance text, reduce the number of nonconforming properties, and encourage appropriate infill development.

If the Commission agrees that it is appropriate to move forward with the development of an amendment to revise the Zoning Ordinance related to the Main Street/Uptown PO-3 parking overlay district, it will be necessary for the Commission to approve a Resolution of Intent to Amend the Zoning Ordinance. This Resolution is the first step for any City-initiated change to the Zoning Ordinance. The amendment process would include the conduct of appropriate public hearings once the draft ordinance containing the change is introduced. A draft of the Resolution, draft ordinance amendments and proposed zoning maps are included in the agenda package for consideration.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Background

The area under consideration for changes to the zoning and parking overlay requirements includes the mixed-use corridors of West Main and West Cary Streets and a few of the side streets in between. There are a mix of uses and zoning districts throughout the subject area and it is characterized as a densely-developed pedestrian shopping environment in proximity to residential neighborhoods.

A companion ordinance would expand the existing Main Street/Uptown PO-3 parking overlay district to include commercial properties along West Cary Street. These properties were originally excluded from the legal description found within the Zoning Ordinance for the parking overlay district when it was put in place in 1993. However, due to a mapping error when the paper zoning maps were translated into the current electronic mapping software between 2004 and 2005, these properties have been shown as being included in the parking overlay on the City's official zoning map. This amendment to the Zoning Ordinance would correct this inconsistency by removing the legal description from the Zoning Ordinance and refer to the official zoning map in order to prevent the possibility of such inconsistencies occurring in the future.

The Zoning Ordinance mandates that the parking requirements for each parking overlay district be established anytime a district is expanded or contracted. This ordinance would also set the new parking standards for the PO-3 district based on the new district boundaries that would be established by the companion paper.

Parking Analysis

The Zoning Ordinance requires businesses to provide off-street parking spaces to support their business. The ordinance bases the number of off-street parking required on use and square footage of floor area devoted to specific use(s).

According to the Zoning Ordinance, the parking overlay district can only be applied to the properties within the UB zone throughout the study area. The intent of the parking overlay district is to enable application of appropriate off-street parking requirements to business uses located within areas of the city characterized by a densely-developed pedestrian shopping environment in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. The districts are intended to recognize that, due to several factors, business uses located in such areas typically generate lower demands for privately-maintained off-street parking spaces than are reflected in the requirements generally applicable in the city. The Zoning Ordinance identifies specific criteria for establishing the parking ratios for each parking overlay district. The amount of commercial floor area, the need for parking and the available public parking are determined in order to establish the parking requirements within each parking overlay district.

Below are the calculations based on the proposed changes to the boundaries of the Main Street/Uptown PO-3 parking overlay district:

Total Nonresidential Floor Area	499,093 square feet
Total Parking Need	1,497 spaces
Public Parking Available	1,221 spaces
Public Parking Allowance	80%

Use	Base PO requirements	PO-3 Current requirements	PO-3 Proposed requirements
Retail stores and shops, shopping centers, food stores, personal service, other service businesses, banks, and similar businesses	1:300	1:360	1:540
Restaurants, theaters, amusement centers, lodges and clubs, and similar uses	1:150	1:180	1:270
Offices including medical and dental offices and clinics, studios, veterinary clinics, and similar uses	1:300 for the first 1,500 square feet of floor area + 1:540 square feet of floor area in excess thereof	1:360 for the first 1,500 square feet of floor area + 1:650 square feet of floor area in excess thereof	1:540 for the first 1,500 square feet of floor area + 1:970 square feet of floor area in excess thereof
Furniture, carpet, appliance, hardware or home improvement stores; clothing, shoe or other repair shops; and similar uses	1:750	1:900	1:1,350

The reduction in the parking requirement can primarily be attributed to the inclusion of the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) public parking Deck at Harrison and West Cary Streets. This increase in public parking and its inclusion in the PO-3 district increases the public parking allowance for the district to 80%.

Master Plan

The City’s Master Plan recommends a variety of land uses throughout the study area, including single-family medium density, mixed-use, and community commercial.

Specific to West Cary Street, the Plan recommends that east of Meadow, the street should transition to a residential environment with limited commercial uses, as described in the 1996 West Cary Street Revitalization Plan. The proposed changes offer limited commercial districts along West Cary Street and retain primarily residential zoning along West Cary Street.

Specific to West Main Street, the Plan recommends a combination of mixed-use and community commercial use. Specific zoning, urban design and development guidance is

provided in the 1999 West Main Street Corridor Plan and should be followed as to avoid, in particular, inappropriate strip-style development. In addition, efforts should be made to provide parking between Main and Cary Streets with decks similar to those in Carytown. The proposed zoning would include the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) parking Deck at Harrison and West Cary Streets within the parking overlay district.

Public Participation

Staff sent notices to over 1,500 property owners, business owners and residents for a public meeting that was initially scheduled for February 26, 2015. This meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather and staff sent another 1,500 notices to property owners, business owners and residents within the corridors and in proximity to the corridors for a public meeting that was held on March 26, 2015. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting and were generally supportive of the proposed changes. Some concern was expressed by residents regarding the reduction of parking requirements.

Staff has received a letter of support from the Uptown Association and the Fan Area Business Alliance.

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