



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

**Ord. No. 2016-234:** To conditionally rezone the properties known as 111 Hull Street and a portion of 1 Hull Street from the RF-1 Riverfront District to the B-4C Central Business District (Conditional).

---

**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** November 7, 2016

---

#### **PETITIONER**

South Canal, LLC

#### **LOCATION**

111 Hull Street and a portion of 1 Hull Street

#### **PURPOSE**

To conditionally rezone the properties known as 111 Hull Street and a portion of 1 Hull Street from the RF-1 Riverfront District to the B-4C Central Business District (Conditional).

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The subject property consists of: (1) A 1.71 acre (74,488 SF) parcel of land (111 Hull Street) improved with an abandoned industrial facility. The property is bound to the north by the James River flood wall, to the east by Diversity Park, to the west by other property of the City of Richmond (a portion of 1 Hull Street), and to the south by the Manchester Canal, and (2) A 1.10 acre (47,916 SF) portion of the city-owned adjacent property (1 Hull Street), which contains a portion of the Richmond flood wall and is intended to be conveyed to the applicant and rezoned as well.

The applicant has requested a conditional rezoning to the B-4C Central Business District (conditional) in order to accommodate a mixed-use development on the subject property with a maximum building height of 16 stories (185 feet), known as the South Canal project. In addition to the proposed conditional rezoning ordinance, several companion ordinances are proposed as part of the South Canal project:

- Ord. No. 2016-250: To declare a public necessity for and to authorize the acquisition of certain fee simple interests and easements in parcels of real property owned by South Canal, LLC at 1 Hull Street, 115 Hull Street, and 2 Decatur Street for the purposes of right-of-way, clearing title to City-owned real estate, providing access to and a buffer for the City's flood wall, and providing stormwater utility facilities.
- Ord. No. 2016-251: To declare surplus and direct the conveyance of a portion of City-owned real estate located at 1 Hull Street for nominal consideration to South Canal, LLC for the purpose of facilitating the development of that land and other land in the immediate vicinity thereof.

- Ord. No. 2016-252: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Development and Cooperation Agreement and related documents between the City of Richmond and South Canal, LLC for the purposes of clearing title to properties owned by the parties, providing for access by the parties to their respective parcels, advancing the City's Riverfront Plan and Master Plan, and stimulating economic development in the area generally bounded by Hull Street to the east, railroad tracks to the south and west, and the James River to the north.

Overall, the development agreement and associated ordinances and agreements will (1) clear up property and title disputes between the City and South Canal, LLC, (2) provide for the replacement of an out-of-date bridge over the Manchester Canal at no cost to the City, and (3) allow for South Canal, LLC to develop its property, furthering the investment in the Manchester area and increasing tax revenues for the City.

As stated above, the proposed conditional rezoning would change the zoning of the subject property from RF-1 to B-4C. A plan of development would be required before development of the site could begin.

Staff finds that the proposed conditional rezoning would enable redevelopment of a blighted site that would be consistent with the Riverfront Plan's recommendation for development with a mix of uses and sufficient density to be an attractor and destination of activity.

Staff further finds that the proposed conditional rezoning would meet the intent of the RF-1 District. The view of the river from the public trail along the Manchester Canal is already obscured by the flood wall along the subject property and views of the river from the flood wall overlook at Diversity Park would be maintained. The mixed-use development possible under the proposed B-4C zoning would promote the intended concentration of uses along the riverfront and limit building development to the landward side of the floodwall. Moreover, continued use of the public trail along the Manchester Canal would not be adversely affected by the development.

Staff further finds that constraints to the subject property, including its relatively small size, location between the Manchester Canal and flood wall, the easements across the subject property required by the City for stormwater management purposes and flood wall operations, and the need for internal circulation of vehicles, limit its ability to be developed with the proper concentration of uses and density discussed above. An increase in the maximum development height for the subject property is therefore justified, provided the massing for the proposed development is limited by other factors, specifically in this instance, the B-4 maximum floor area ratio of 6.0.

Staff further finds that the location of the subject property is situated so that buildings constructed thereon would not be in close proximity to neighboring buildings and would therefore not adversely interfere with the provision of adequate light and air to those buildings.

Staff further finds that the proffered conditions would offer further assurances that the B-4C zoning designation of the property would promote development in keeping with the City's goals for increased private and public use of the riverfront.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the conditional rezoning to B-4C - Central Business (Conditional).

---

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The subject property consists of:

(1) A 1.71 acre (74,488 SF) parcel of land (111 Hull Street) improved with an abandoned industrial facility. The property is bound to the north by the James River flood wall, to the east by Diversity Park, to the west by other property of the City of Richmond (a portion of 1 Hull Street), and to the south by the Manchester Canal, and

(2) A 1.10 acre (47,916 SF) portion of the city owned adjacent property (1 Hull Street), which contains a portion of the Richmond flood wall and is intended to be conveyed to the applicant and rezoned as well.

Both properties are located in the Old Town Manchester neighborhood of the Old South planning district.

### **Proposed Use of the Property**

The applicant has requested a rezoning to the B-4C Central Business District (conditional) in order to accommodate a mixed-use development with a maximum building height of 16 stories (185 feet).

### **Master Plan**

The subject property falls within a Natural Area of the Manchester district, as established by the Richmond Downtown Plan. Such areas are characterized by “a wilderness landscape that is untouched by development, and whose ecological features are preserved. The uninhabited islands in the James River are an example of a wilderness condition in Downtown Richmond. These islands remain unsettled due to periodic flooding of the river, and are preserved in their natural condition.

Buildings are typically not located in Natural Areas, except in special cases.” (p. 3.20). The Downtown Plan’s illustrative plan suggests that the subject property should be included in a linear park (p. 4.33).

The more recently developed Riverfront Plan designates the subject property (referred to as “South Canal Lofts (formerly Federal Paperboard Co.) for future development, stating: “The Plan anticipates incremental redevelopment of under-utilized parcels and languishing former industrial sites. Development strategies should favor mixed use, with an emphasis on street level retail, where appropriate. The fundamental emphasis of redevelopment along the Riverfront is to intensify pedestrian activity at street level through infill development with sufficient density to be an attractor and destination of activity. Greater density reinforces

urban character, provides for an increase in pedestrian activity, resulting in a safer and more vibrant city.

Each redevelopment project will be subject to the existing public process and review to assess and enforce massing and detailing complementary to the Riverfront. The architectural expression of new infill development should reference the rich historic context of the Richmond Riverfront, speaking to the present without discarding the past, creating the next generation of landmark structures and neighborhood places” (p. 11).

### **Zoning & Ordinance Conditions**

The subject property is a part of a larger RF-1 zoning district that encompasses much of the land along the southern bank of the James River in the vicinity. B-5C, B-6, B-7, and RF-2 zoning districts are present south of the canal.

According to the Zoning Ordinance, the intent of the RF-1 riverfront district is to provide for modest scale planned mixed-use development on relatively large sites adjacent to the riverfront in a manner that will protect prominent views of the James River from public spaces and will encourage public and private use of and access to the riverfront. The district is intended to facilitate the economic development benefits which will accrue through enhanced commercial and residential development and increased tourism generated by riverfront redevelopment. Finally, the district regulations are intended to promote a concentration of uses that result in a high degree of pedestrian attraction and activity along the riverfront, while protecting the area at the shore of the river from building development.

If rezoned as proposed, the subject property would be subject to the requirements of the B-4 district, including requirements pertaining to a mix of permitted uses, yard and building separation requirements, screening of refuse areas, location, landscaping, and screening of parking areas, floor area ratio, usable open space, building height, and façade fenestration.

In addition to the requirements of the B-4 district, the applicant has proffered development conditions on the property, including:

- A height restriction of 185' (16 stories)

- A prohibition against the following uses: adult entertainment, adult bookstores, adult motion picture theaters, funeral homes, furniture repair and upholstery shops, hospitals, janitorial and custodial service and supply establishments, animal hospital including boarding clinics, flea markets, and shelters

- Provision of car and emergency vehicle turn-arounds

- Provision of a secondary emergency access across Diversity Park constructed of a minimally-visible grass paver system

- Installation and maintenance of vegetative screening along Diversity Park

- Approval of site development and bridge replacement plans by Richmond City Department of Public Utilities and United States Army Corps of Engineers

-Development improvements shall not conflict with or encroach upon the Manchester Canal bank and floodwall pedestrian path

-Provision of residential units or commercial uses along Manchester Canal and screening of parking spaces

**Surrounding Area**

A mix of industrial, public open space, multi-family residential, commercial, office, and government land uses are present in the vicinity.

**Community Participation**

Notice was sent to the Manchester Alliance and Councilwoman Ellen F. Robertson. A letter of no support was received from the Manchester Alliance. Letters of support were also received.

**Staff Contact:** Matthew J. Ebinger, AICP, (804) 646-6308