



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

CPCR.2019.070: To approve and adopt Plan of Development Overlay Design Guidelines for the Arts District Station/Monroe Ward Plan of Development Overlay District.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Department of Planning and Development Review
Date: July 15, 2019

PETITIONER

City of Richmond
900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

LOCATION

The Plan of Development Overlay District is bounded by Belvidere Street to the west, the Downtown Expressway to the south, Broad Street to the north, and Ninth Street to the east.

PURPOSE

To approve and adopt Plan of Development Overlay District Design Guidelines for the Arts District Station/Monroe Ward Plan of Development Overlay District.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

At its July 15th, 2019 meeting, the City Planning Commission will vote on a set of five ordinances to rezone Monroe Ward to meet the recommendations of the Pulse Corridor Plan. One of those ordinances will create a Plan of Development Overlay District bounded by Belvidere Street to the west, Broad Street to the north, the Downtown Expressway to the south, and Ninth Street to the east. All new buildings or additions over 1,000 square feet in that district will be required to undergo a Plan of Development Review based on the six form elements of the Pulse Corridor Plan (see Ord. No. 2019-171).

Many developments in the city undergo a POD review, depending on the size of the building and the zoning district. City Code §§ 30-1030.4(5) states that the Director of Planning and Development Review shall evaluate plans of development according to specific criteria, including compatibility with surrounding development and community character, as well as urban design as set forth in the City of Richmond Master Plan. The Pulse Corridor Plan is an adopted amendment of the Master Plan, and outlines six form elements each new building in the area should have:

1. *Hold the corner:* Buildings and spaces at intersections have active ground floors that wrap around the corner.
2. *Entrances face the street:* Main entrances to businesses and residences front the street, fostering pedestrian activity.
3. *Appropriate setbacks/stepbacks:* Commercial uses are closer to the street while residential uses are set back to foster privacy and to create a semi-public space.

Stepbacks at upper stories create a means to honor existing form without overwhelming it.

4. *Transparency*: Façade fenestration allows visibility to and from the street. This is especially important on the ground floor, where fenestration should occupy a higher percentage of the building face.
5. *Façade Articulation*: Long, monolithic facades should be broken up and made more human-scale by varying the streetwall plane, height, colors, and materials.
6. *Screened parking/services*: Attractive landscaping pushed to the sidewalk help maintain a streetwall and mitigate the disruption caused by surface parking lots and utilitarian services.

These are common building elements on streets where people like to be and where pedestrians feel safe and engaged. Ensuring that new buildings have the six form elements is a way of ensuring that we create an intact neighborhood where people want to be.

Since the Director of Planning and Development Review is compelled by City Code and the adopted Pulse Corridor Plan to evaluate Plans of Development according to the six form elements, PDR staff created a Plan of Development Overlay Design Guidelines booklet to make the requirements clear to any property owner or development team before the design process begins. The guidelines explain the process and offer positive and negative examples of each form element from Monroe Ward and surrounding neighborhoods.

Staff recommends approval of the Resolution.

Staff Contact:

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