



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Location 2023-02: Location Review of proposed utility substation located at 928 E 4th Street.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: December 4, 2023

PETITIONER

Dominion Energy

LOCATION

928 E 4th Street

PURPOSE

Approval of the general location of a proposed utility substation for Dominion Energy, a Public Utility Company.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Chapter 17, Section 17.07 of the City Charter indicates that no public utility shall be constructed or authorized within an area with an adopted Master Plan unless its general location, but not its character and extent, has been submitted to and approved by the Planning Commission.

The subject properties are zoned M-2 - Heavy Industrial, which permits utilities and substations.

The property is designated Industrial, as a future land use by the Richmond Master Plan.

Dominion Energy is proposing to purchase the property and replace an existing industrial use (storage yard) and construct a new electric substation. The power station is needed to serve continued growth in the Manchester area.

Staff finds that that substation use is an industrial use which is appropriate in the M-2 zone and the Industrial future land use designation of the Master Plan. Staff finds that the provision of greater electrical utility infrastructure is necessary to facilitate Master Plan supported development in and around the Manchester area. Staff finds that the City of Richmond owns a parcel of land to the west of the subject property, between the proposed use and existing portions of Manchester that are developing, creating an appropriate buffer between the two use areas of mixed use and proposed industrial use. Staff further finds that the site is marginal in the sense that it is difficult to access due to surrounding transportation infrastructure and likely would be difficult to redevelop into other denser uses.

Therefore, Staff recommends approval.

Note: This approval is only for 17.07 Location Approval and does not preclude other requirements or required approvals from the City Code.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is currently zoned M-2 Heavy Industrial and are located in the Ancarows Landing neighborhood.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is proposing to construct a utility substation for Dominion Energy, a Public Utility Company.

Master Plan

Industrial Land Use Designation

Manufacturing and production areas that primarily feature processing, research and development, warehousing, and distribution.

Development Style: The arrangement of structures, parking and circulation areas, and open spaces should recognize the unique needs of industrial users. Industrial areas have a design aesthetic that buffers industrial uses from other adjacent uses.

Ground Floor: Not applicable.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access is accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Parking lots and parking areas are located to the rear of street-facing buildings. Vehicle entrances are located off alleys or secondary streets.

Intensity: One to three stories with exceptions for unique building features relating to that industrial use.

Primary Uses: Industrial and open space.

Secondary Uses: Retail/office/personal service.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding parcels are zoned the same M-2 Heavy Industrial. Industrial uses are located to the south. Highway is located to the north and east. Train tracks are located to the west and industrial and residential uses are located further west.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff has not received any communication from neighbors regarding this project.

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