



## CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2021-271** - To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the total amount of \$1,489,000.00 from the Virginia Department of Transportation and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Capital Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Public Works' Transportation Projects project in the Transportation category by \$1,489,000.00 for the purpose of funding the construction of improvements to Forest Hill Avenue from its intersection with Hathaway Road to its intersection with Powhite Parkway..

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** October 4, 2021

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#### **PETITIONER**

Bobby Vincent Jr., Director, Department of Public Works

#### **LOCATION**

Forest Hill Avenue

#### **PURPOSE**

To amend Ord. No. 2021-042 adopted May 24, 2021 which adopted the Capital Improvement Plan for fiscal year 22 and to authorize the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the total amount of \$1,489,000 from the Virginia Department of Transportation and appropriate the revenues by amending the FY2022-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget by appropriating \$1,489,000 for the purpose of funding the construction of the Forest Hill Avenue Improvement project. Award Number 500286.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

This ordinance is to accept and appropriate \$1,489,000 in Federal funds from the Virginia Department of Transportation to support the active construction contract for the Forest Hill Avenue Improvement Project.

Forest Hill Avenue is an urban minor arterial road serving regional traffic and the surrounding neighborhoods and the surrounding businesses. It connects two major limited access highways, the Powhite Parkway and Chippenham Parkway and includes a significant business corridor. The project will provide a safe, multi-modal corridor for all users and improves livability. The project is funded through coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and RVA Planning Organization using primarily Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds. Forest Hill Avenue within the project limits will be improved to include 2 – 11' foot travel lanes in each direction, a 12' foot raised landscaped median including left turn lanes, designated 5' bike lanes (continuation of the US 1 bike route from Fairlee Road to Hathaway Road on both sides), curbs, 4' sidewalks (both sides), pedestrian crosswalks, and a closed storm sewer system that will improve drainage along Forest Hill Avenue as well as adjacent neighborhoods.

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Construction began on the project in the fall of 2018. During construction the project encountered unforeseen field conditions requiring plan design revisions along with extensive utility relocations by third parties which has caused a longer construction duration. The cost of construction and construction administration has increased therefore requiring the need for additional federal funds to support the project. In FY21 RVA Planning Organization approved \$1,489,000 in reimbursable federal funds to support the increased construction cost. The funds were adopted by the CTB and allocated through the Virginia Department of Transportation's Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP).

The total project cost is estimated at \$14,200,000.00 and is scheduled to be completed by December 1, 2021.

City Administration recommends approval of this request.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

City Right of Way, Forest Hill Avenue

### **PROPOSED USE FOR THE PROPERTY**

Multi-modal corridor

### **MASTER PLAN**

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates three future land uses for this segment of Forest Hill Avenue which is bookended by the Powhite Parkway and Hathaway Road. The eastern end of the segment calls for Institutional uses which include "public and quasi-public entities, such as local, state, and federal government, hospitals, and universities, schools, and religions institutions. The development style includes several buildings owned by an institution are often connected by an engaging character that creates a campus-like environment. Active commercial ground floor uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Residential uses may be permitted on the ground floor in certain sections of the area. Regardless, ground floor residential units should still have street-oriented façades with setbacks, front yards, and balconies where appropriate. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveway entrances are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages and minimal driveway entrances are allowed on secondary streets. Ground floor parking is prohibited on principal street frontages.

Intensity: Varies.

Primary Uses: Institutional, cultural, government, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Retail/office/personal service and multi-family.

The western end of the segment is designated as Corridor Mixed-Use which are uses "found along major commercial corridors and envisioned to provide for medium- to medium high-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development." The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary significantly depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Uses may be

mixed horizontally in several buildings on a block or vertically within the same building. Developments continue introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Ground floor uses engage with, and enliven, the street. Monolithic walls are discouraged, while windows, doors, storefronts, and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street are encouraged. Active commercial ground floor uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be of alleys whenever possible; new driveways are prohibited on priority and principal streets. Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening; shared parking requirements are encouraged.

Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to ten stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas. New buildings that are taller than historical buildings should step back from the build-to line after matching the height of the predominant cornice line of the block.  
Primary Uses: Retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space.  
Secondary Uses: Single-family houses, institutional, and government. (p. 60)

This portion of the public right of way is also within one of the Plan's Neighborhood Nodes which are defined as "local crossroads typically within or next to larger residential areas that offers goods and services to nearby residents, employees, and visitors. (p. 24)

The central portion of the right-of-way is within the Plan's Residential land use designation which includes neighborhoods "...consisting primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature." The development style is houses on medium-sized and large-sized lots in a largely auto-dependent environment. Homes are setback from the street. Future developments continue and/or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Future single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family residential buildings are built to a scale and design that is consistent with existing buildings. Bicycle and pedestrian access are prioritized and accommodated. Low residential density means that it is not possible to provide frequent transit within these areas; however, frequent transit may be found at the edges of these areas within more intense future land use designations. Many homes have driveways and/or garages, which are located of an alley behind the home if an alley is present.

Intensity: Buildings are generally one to three stories. Lot sizes generally range up to 5,000 to 20,000+ sq. ft. Residential density of 2 to 10 housing units per acre.  
Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, and open space.  
Secondary Uses: Duplexes and small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), institutional, and cultural. Secondary uses may be found along major streets.

## **ZONING**

Primarily R-2 Single-family Residential with some RO-1 Residential Office and B-2 Community Business District on the western end of the improvement area.

## **SURROUNDING AREA**

The area includes large areas of single-family detached residential with some commercial uses along Forest Hill Avenue.

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