



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2016-190: To declare that a public necessity exists and to authorize the acquisition by gift, purchase, condemnation, or otherwise of certain fee simple interests, temporary construction easements, permanent drainage easements, and permanent utility easements, for the purpose of constructing transportation improvements as part of the East Riverfront Transportation Improvement Program project in the Transportation category of the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Capital Budget.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 18, 2016

PETITIONER

City of Richmond, Department of Public Works

LOCATION

Portions of property along the Dock Street, Water Street, and East Main Street right of way between Pear Street and Old Main Street.

PURPOSE

To declare that a public necessity exists and to authorize the acquisition by gift, purchase, condemnation, or otherwise of certain fee simple interests, temporary construction easements, permanent drainage easements, and permanent utility easements, for the purpose of constructing transportation improvements as part of the East Riverfront Transportation Improvement Program project in the Transportation category of the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Capital Budget.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

For many years, the East Riverfront area has been cited for future development to help unveil the City's riverfront properties. Most recently, the City and developers have presented plans that will spur the development of the East Riverfront area over the next several years. In FY 16 the East Riverfront Transportation Improvements project was adopted by City Council. The project includes the relocation of Dock Street from Peach Street to Peebles Street; the installation of a roundabout at the intersection of relocated Dock Street and East Main Street; widening and streetscape improvements along East Main Street to allow for parking, pedestrians, bike lanes, and two (2) Bus Rapid Transit stations; signal installation at the intersection of East Main and Nicholson Street; streetscape improvements along Nicholson Street; and the closure of Water Street from Ash Street to Nicholson Street.

The project is funded in the FY16-FY20 Capital Improvement Program in the amount of \$7.9 million. Design was funded in FY 16 (\$800,000) and the Right of Way and Construction phases are funded in FY17 and FY18 (\$7.1 million).

The project improvements will require additional right-of-way, temporary easements, permanent

easements and utility easements from a total of nineteen (19) parcels, as part of this project. Of the nineteen 19 parcels, five (5) belong to the City of Richmond, two (2) belong to Economic Development Authority (EDA) and twelve (12) are privately owned parcels.

These acquisitions are shown in the attached plans prepared by Whitman, Requardt and Associates (WRA) designated as DPW Dwg. No. 0-28708, sheets 1 to 7. The estimated cost of the ROW acquisition is approximately \$420,500 based on assessed property values which is budgeted in the FY17 CIP. The project construction is scheduled to start in the spring of 2017 and finish in the fall of 2017 in order to accommodate the grand opening of the Bus Rapid Transit system (October 2017).

There are no relocation of businesses or residences required with this project. Property rights will be purchased using fair market value and negotiations. However, if we are unable to negotiate with property owners the department will request that the Chief Administrative Officer exercise the authority delegated through Council to perform condemnation action of fee simple and all easements required under City code section 18.03. If condemnation is required, the City will continue negotiations with the property owners during the condemnation process. This will allow the project to maintain the schedule.

The approval of this paper is imperative for the Department to meet the project schedule of construction. The East Riverfront Project is scheduled to be advertised in December 2016.

The Department of Public Works recommends approval of this Ordinance

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

Various parcels along the Dock Street, Water Street, and East Main Street right of way between Pear Street and Old Main Street.

Proposed Use of the Property

The acquisition of additional right of way and easements to enable implementation of the East Riverfront Transportation Improvement Program project. The goal of this project is to provide a multi-modal transportation network that will enhance safety, improve mobility and connectivity, accommodate the rapidly developing East Riverfront area, and implement the City's under-development complete streets policy.

Improvements will include: improved pedestrian and bicycle access along the E. Main St corridor, public parking accommodations, and necessary upgrades for safe operation of the Pulse BRT system. A separate but companion project in the area will be the Route 5 bridge replacement over Norfolk Southern Railroad. All of this will help implement a transportation system that is consistent with ongoing and envisioned development in the area, including the Stone Brewery & Bistro, USP-Echo Harbor Parcel, parkland at the former Lehigh Cement parcel, improvements to Intermediate Terminal Dock, Rocketts Landing, the Virginia Capital Trail, and the Gillie's Creek Greenway.

Master Plan

The Downtown Plan recommends Public & Open Space for the property located south of the Dock Street and Water Street right of way, between Pear Street and Gillies Creek, and for the property north of the Dock Street and Water Street right of way along Gillies Creek.

The Downtown Plan establishes Urban Center Area land use for the property located north of the Dock Street and Water Street right of way, between Pear Street and Gillies Creek, and between Gillies Creek and Nicholson Street, and for property located south of the Water Street and Main Street right of way, between Gillies Creek and Nicholson Street.

Property north of the East Main Street right of way, east of Nicholson Street is designated for Urban Center Area and Mixed Use land uses.

The Urban Center Area is characterized by higher density, mixed-use development, typically arranged on a fine-grained street network, with wide sidewalks, regular tree planting, and minimal setbacks (Downtown Plan, p. 3.25).

Primary uses within Mixed Use areas include combinations of office, retail, personal service, general commercial and service uses and, in some cases, multi-family residential and dwelling units above ground floor commercial (Master Plan, p. 134).

The Riverfront Plan designates the subject rights of way as new/enhanced or priority connections and recommends a combination of new development and open space in the area, including riverfront amenity improvements and the Virginia Capital Trail.

Zoning

The parcel at the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Pear Street and Dock Street is zoned M-1 Light Industrial. The parcel at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Nicholson Street and East Main Street is zoned RF-2C Riverfront (conditional). The remaining property is zoned M-2 Heavy Industrial.

Surrounding Area

A mix of vacant, industrial, and some office uses are present in the area, though significant improvements are taking place, such as completion of the Virginia Capital Trail, removal of the Lehigh cement towers, and redevelopment of Intermediate Wharf and Intermediate Terminal.

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