



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

ORD. 2020-103: To rezone certain properties in the areas surrounding the Science Museum of Virginia, Allison Street, and the Virginia Commonwealth University and the Virginia Union University Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit station areas.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Department of Planning and Development Review
Date: September 8, 2020

PETITIONER

City of Richmond
900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

LOCATION

The Pulse Corridor Plan Phase III Rezoning includes the Science Museum, Allison Street and VCU&VUU Station areas, in order to implement the next phase of the adopted Pulse Corridor Plan. The total area is bounded generally by Arthur Ashe Boulevard to the West; I-95/64 and the railroad to the North; Belvidere Street to the East; and West Broad Street, West Grace Street, the alley between West Grace Street and West Franklin Street, and West Franklin Street to the South. Not all properties in this area will be rezoned, though all will be included in the Plan of Development Overlay District. Single- and two-family residential districts will maintain their current zoning.

PURPOSE

To amend the official zoning map for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of the Pulse Corridor Plan.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This Ordinance is one of a set of three which will rezone the areas around the Science Museum, Allison Street and VCU&VUU BRT Pulse Station areas, in accordance with the recommendations of the adopted 2017 Pulse Corridor Plan. This ordinance will change the Official Zoning Map, Ordinance 2020-104 will designate certain streets as "Priority" or "Street-Oriented Commercial" streets, and Ordinance 2020-105 will amend the Official Zoning text of the UB, B-4 and B-7 districts. Changes in this ordinance include rezoning from Industrial to higher density mixed-use districts; Industrial to Residential districts; creating a Plan of Development Overlay district based on the six form elements of the Pulse Corridor Plan; and adding Street-Oriented Commercial and Priority Street designations.

Staff recommends approval of the ordinance.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Background

These amendments are formulated based on the recommendations of the adopted Pulse Corridor Plan, analysis of the existing zoning ordinance, knowledge of existing development trends and plans, and an extensive public engagement process, both for the plan and for this area rezoning. In a growing city currently experiencing both a development boom and significant population increase, it is important to identify areas appropriate for new dense development and proactively rezone to make the desired development possible.

Master Plan

The first corridor-wide recommendation of the Pulse Corridor Plan is to create a Plan of Development Overlay based on the six form elements in the plan (p IX). This Ordinance will create a Plan of Development Overlay district which mirrors the outline of the future land use map of the Pulse Corridor Plan, covering the entire rezoning area and reaching west to Arthur Ashe Boulevard (see attached rezoning summary for more information).

The Pulse Corridor Plan recommends rezoning station areas to align with the Future Land Use map. The Future Land Use in the rezoning area is a combination of Nodal Mixed-Use, Corridor Mixed-Use, Neighborhood Mixed-Use and Institutional. Each zoning change is consistent with the Future Land Use map and is intended to guide new development to meet the vision of the Pulse Corridor Plan.

Recommendations from the Pulse Corridor Plan are consistent with recommendations from the draft Richmond 300 Master Plan Future Land Use Map.

Existing and Proposed Zoning

This ordinance will create a Plan of Development Overlay District on the official zoning map, requiring that each new development in the area is consistent with the six form elements of the Pulse Corridor Plan.

This rezoning will change areas from: M-1 Light Industrial to B-4 Central Business District; B-3 General Business to B-4 Central Business District; M-2 Heavy Industrial to B-7 Mixed-Use Business District; M-1 Light Industrial to B-7 Mixed-Use Business District; M-1 Light Industrial to R-63 Multi-Family Urban Residential District; R-53 Multi-Family Urban Residential District to R-63 Multi-Family Urban Residential District; R-73 Multi-Family Residential District to B-4 Central Business District; M-1 Light Industrial to R-8 Urban Residential District; and UB-PO4 Urban Business Parking Overlay 4 to B-4 Central Business District.

Many parts of the larger rezoning area will remain unchanged at this time. Some of the areas already fit the Future Land Use Map, and so no change is recommended. All single- and two-family residential neighborhoods will retain existing zoning at this time. Parcels

along the south side of Broad Street, from Ryland Street to Arthur Ashe Boulevard will retain existing zoning at this time.

Attached Summary Document

In order to convey the ideas and reasoning behind this rezoning process clearly and thoroughly, staff created a summary document complete with explanatory text, maps of existing and proposed zoning, exact zoning changes, and explanation of each recommendation. [Please see summary document for further details.](#)

Public Engagement

As part of the development of the Pulse Corridor Plan over the course of 2015-2017, PDR staff held numerous public forums, set up online surveys, attended standing civic association meetings, and tracked public feedback.

In December 2019, staff hosted two public open house sessions at the Science Museum of Virginia with a presentation and a question/answer session on the proposed rezoning. Staff sent a letter to each affected property owner notifying them of the intent to rezone, of the public open houses, and where to get more information. Staff circulated a rezoning summary and posted on the City website. Over the past ten months, staff has had many conversations with property owners in the area, as well as representatives of VCU and Sauer Properties, the majority of whom have expressed support for the rezoning. Please see letters of support and opposition attached.

In addition, staff met with representatives of the West Grace Street Association five times between December 2018 and October 2019, and presented a draft map of the rezoning area in October for their review and feedback. The Director of Planning and Development Review attended the West Grace Street Association meeting February 11, 2020 to discuss the rezoning and answer any questions from Association members.

Members of the West Grace Street Association have expressed concern regarding allowed height in the proposed zoning districts, and staff has worked to address their concerns. In October 2019, upon request of the West Grace Street Association, staff created diagrams comparing the B-5 and the TOD-1 district, in order to illustrate the difference between the two districts and why staff believes TOD-1 is the better district for a small area on the south side of Broad Street across from the Science Museum. As of May 2020, neighborhood representatives wish to postpone any rezoning in favor of further discussion. In response to the concerns of the West Grace Street Association, PDR staff has removed the parcels along the south side of Broad Street from the rezoning area at this time.

Notice of the rezoning has been published in both the Richmond Times Dispatch and the Richmond Free Press, in accordance with Virginia State Code. Letters were sent to each property owner in the rezoning area in November of 2019 and April of 2020, also in accordance with State Code. Staff posted rezoning signs in the rezoning area in accordance with City Planning Commission Resolution 2015-010.

Staff Contact:

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