



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021 – 187 - To authorize the CAO to accept a retaining wall and a variable width retaining wall maintenance easement along with a 0.23 sq. ft. right of way dedication from Trailhead Development and certain property owners within the 7 West Subdivision located at W. 7th Street and Semmes Avenue three separate deeds substantially in the form as attached to this O&R Request and as shown on a plan prepared by Shadrach & Associates designated as DPW Dwg. No. N-28952 dated 04/12/2021 and entitled "A VARIABLE WIDTH RETAINING WALL MAINTENANCE EASEMENT ACROSS LOTS #5-11 AND A 0.23 SQ. FT. RIGHT OF WAY DEDICATION ON LOT #5, 7WEST SUBDIVISION CITY OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA" at the request of the applicant and to authorize the CAO to execute these documents.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 6, 2021

PETITIONER

Bobby Vincent Jr., Director Department of Public Works

LOCATION

W. 7th Street and Semmes Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the CAO to accept a retaining wall and a variable width retaining wall maintenance easement along with a 0.23 sq. ft. right of way dedication from Trailhead Development and certain property owners within the 7 West Subdivision located at W. 7th Street and Semmes Avenue three separate deeds substantially in the form as attached to this O&R Request and as shown on a plan prepared by Shadrach & Associates designated as DPW Dwg. No. N-28952 dated 04/12/2021 and entitled "A VARIABLE WIDTH RETAINING WALL MAINTENANCE EASEMENT ACROSS LOTS #5-11 AND A 0.23 SQ. FT. RIGHT OF WAY DEDICATION ON LOT #5, 7WEST SUBDIVISION CITY OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA" at the request of the applicant and to authorize the CAO to execute these documents.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

A retaining wall constructed as part of the 7 West Subdivision development provides structural support to highway traffic travelling on the on-ramp to the Manchester Bridge. This retaining wall should be accepted into the City's asset management inventory in order for the City to own and maintain as a public asset. In addition, the City is accepting a variable width maintenance easement for the future maintenance of this retaining wall and accepting additional right of way dedication from a property owner.

7 West Subdivision Development constructed in 2017 consist of twelve (12) single family, three story town homes located on the City facing lot along West 7th Street and 6th Street in the Manchester Area of Richmond.

As part of the development, a structural retaining wall was proposed to be constructed along the southern property line of this property adjacent to West 7th Street along the on-ramp to the Manchester Bridge.

Approved plans in 2017 indicated a Concrete Segmental Retaining Wall was to be constructed. Portions of this retaining wall encroached upon public right-of-way. An encroachment permit would be required for this retaining wall.

Upon a field inspection performed during construction, DPW observed that the approved retaining wall was not adequate nor was it the customary for a wall of this type to support the load of the City's infrastructure. DPW halted the construction in order for the retaining wall to be redesigned.

Due to the retaining wall supporting highway traffic for the on-ramp to Manchester Bridge, DPW recommended that the retaining wall be designed per AASHTO LRFD specifications, meet Structure and Bridge, Vol. V, Part 11, Chapter 10 and be an approved wall system having a minimum 75 year life span.

The Developer subsequently revised the design drawings for the retaining wall per DPW requirements and guidelines. Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) were provided by the Developer and DPW's third party Construction Inspection consultant to inspect construction of this retaining wall. DPW reviewed and approved all required submittals and shop drawings for the retaining wall prior to construction. The Developer provided all Construction Engineering Inspection reports (concrete, steel, timber piles, and geotechnical reports). DPW has accepted the construction of this retaining wall based upon these reports and by recommendation of DPW's third party Construction Inspections consultant.

Upon completion, the Developer has continued to work with DPW to obtain an encroachment permit for this retaining wall. Through several changes in ownership of 7 West Subdivision, it was difficult to come to an agreement over the posting of the required Maintenance Bond and Removal Bond for this retaining wall, as the encroachment permit requires.

Based upon discussions with the current representative for 7 West, it was agreed upon that the owners would: 1. Donate the retaining wall asset to the City; 2. Dedicate additional right-of-way to the City; and 3. Grant a variable width maintenance easement to the City for the future maintenance of this retaining wall.

The Department of Public Works requests acceptance of this retaining wall as a City asset and acceptance of maintenance easement and right of way.

City Administration recommends approval of this request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

SITE DESCRIPTION

7 West Subdivision located at W. 7th Street and Semmes Avenue.

PROPOSED USE FOR THE PROPERTY

A retaining wall constructed as part of the 7 West Subdivision development.

MASTER PLAN

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates this area as Destination Mixed-Use which is defined as "Key gateways featuring prominent destinations, such as retail, sports venues, and large employers, as well as housing and open space. Located at the convergence of several modes of transportation, including Pulse BRT or other planned transit improvements." (p. 64) Higher density, transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites. New development should be urban in form, may be of larger scale than existing context, and, where relevant, should pay special attention to the historic character of the existing context. Development should enhance the public realm and create a sense of place. Many buildings are vertically mixed-use. Developments continue or 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 street frontages. Surface parking is prohibited as a principal use; when surface parking is provided as an accessory use, it should be located to the rear of buildings and screened. Parking requirements are reduced to allow more market-based parking strategies, including shared parking. Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories.

Primary Uses: Retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space.
Secondary Uses: Institutional and government.

This portion of City right-of-way is within the Manchester Priority Growth Node and is one of the targeted areas where the City is encouraging the most significant growth in population and development over the next 20 years. (p. 24)

This portion of Semmes Avenue is within the Plan's Great Streets typology and is considered a "Major Mixed-Use Street", which are intended to:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, through commercial and mixed-use areas
- Prioritize use and density-scaled sidewalks and crosswalks
- Require form elements, such as buildings to the street with parking in the rear, as well as building windows and entrances on the street
- Incorporate streetscape features, such as trees, benches, and trash receptacles
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Prioritize the curbside for walking, bicycling, transit, and short-term parking access and loading for local shops and restaurants

ZONING

This portion of public right-of-way is within RF-2, Riverfront District.

SURROUNDING AREA

The area includes primarily mixed-use, higher density multi-family with some commercial uses and public open-space.

Staff Contact:

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