



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2018-210: To conditionally rezone the properties known as 3 Manchester Road, 3A Manchester Road, and 2 Hull Street from the RF-1 Riverfront District to the B-4 Central Business District (Conditional), upon certain proffered conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: September 4, 2018

PETITIONER

Lory Markham – Markham Planning

LOCATION

3 Manchester Road, 3A Manchester Road, and 2 Hull Street

PURPOSE

To conditionally rezone the properties known as 3 Manchester Road, 3A Manchester Road, and 2 Hull Street from the RF-1 Riverfront District to the B-4 Central Business District (Conditional), upon certain proffered conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The property owner has requested a conditional rezoning to the B-4 Central Business District with proffered conditions. This will enable development of the subject property at a greater building height than the current RF-1 zoning allows, in order to accomplish higher residential densities.

The proposed rezoning would cover three contiguous properties generally along the Manchester Road right of way. Combined, these properties consist of approximately 3.5 acres of predominantly unimproved land. The properties are located in the City's Old South Planning District and the Old Town Manchester Neighborhood. The properties are adjacent to Walker's Creek to the south and are within Chesapeake Bay Protection and Management Areas.

Staff finds that the proposed rezoning would contribute to the continued revitalization of the Manchester area through higher density infill development generally consistent with the Downtown Plan and the Riverfront Plan.

Staff finds that the proposal to locate a B-4(C) District to the rear of an RF-1 District fronting the James River would enable a staggering of building heights, analogous to that which would be enabled by locating an RF-2 District to the rear of an RF-1 District. Moreover, the proposed B-4(C) District and proffered conditions would generally meet the intent of the RF-2 District, as it applies to the subject property.

Staff finds the proffered conditions would minimize adverse effects that development of the site would have on future improvements along Walker's Creek intended for public use, as recommended by the Riverfront Plan.

Therefore staff recommends approval of the Conditional Rezoning request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The proposed rezoning would cover three contiguous properties generally along the Manchester Road right of way. Combined, these properties consist of approximately 3.5 acres of predominantly unimproved land. The properties are located in the City's Old South Planning District and the Old Town Manchester Neighborhood. The properties are adjacent to Walker's Creek to the south and are within Chesapeake Bay Protection and Management Areas.

Proposed Use of the Property

A mixed-use residential development would be undertaken if the proposed conditional rezoning is adopted.

Master Plan

These properties were included in the 2009 Downtown Plan, which recommends that they be developed consistent with the Urban Center Character Area. 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.

Specifically addressing Manchester, the Downtown Plan states, “Manchester will benefit greatly from new construction and the infill of its many vacant properties. Such infill will introduce new energy to the district by increasing the residential population, repairing the streetscape, and enhancing safety by providing ‘eyes on the street’. (p. 4.33)”

“The Riverfront should also be developed as a recreational roadway wrapping around the district, with buildings addressing the river and a system of parks providing connections to the water.” (p. 4.40)

The subject property is designated in the City’s 2012 Riverfront Plan as an area for future development with open space and watercourse improvements along Walker’s Creek. “The Plan anticipates incremental redevelopment of under-utilized parcels and languishing former industrial sites. Development strategies should favor mixed-use, with an emphasis on street level retail, where appropriate. The fundamental emphasis of redevelopment along the Riverfront is to intensify pedestrian activity at street level through infill development with sufficient density to be an attractor and destination of activity. Greater density reinforces urban character, provides for an increase in pedestrian activity, resulting in a safer and more vibrant city (p. 11)”.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The subject property is currently located in the RF-1 Riverfront District and fronts Walker’s Creek to the south. Parcels to the north of the subject property front the James River and are also within the RF-1 District. Per zoning requirements, no building shall exceed six stories in height in the RF-1 District and no building shall exceed 13 stories in height in the RF-2 District.

In an effort to preserve views of the river while encouraging higher-density development, RF-1 Districts can be located along the riverfront, with RF-2 Districts to the rear of the RF-1 Districts. In this configuration, the height requirements of the districts encourage a

staggering of buildings in which taller buildings are located to the rear of shorter buildings along the riverfront.

Per the Zoning Ordinance, the intent of the RF-2 Riverfront District is to provide for medium scale planned mixed-use development on relatively large sites in close proximity to the riverfront in a manner that will protect prominent views of the James River from public spaces and will encourage public and private use of and access to the riverfront. The district is intended to facilitate the economic development benefits that will accrue through enhanced commercial and residential development and increased tourism generated by riverfront redevelopment. Finally, the district regulations are intended to promote a concentration of uses that result in a high degree of pedestrian attraction and activity along the riverfront, while protecting the area at the shore of the river from building development.

If rezoned as proposed to the B-4 Central Business District (conditional), the development requirements of the B-4 district, including permitted uses, setbacks, screening, parking areas, floor area and usable open space, and building façade fenestration, would apply to the property.

Per the Zoning Ordinance, there shall be no maximum height limit in the B-4 Central Business District, provided that no portion of a building shall penetrate an inclined plane originating at the centerline of each abutting street and extending over the lot at an inclination of one foot horizontal for each four feet vertical. However, the following proffered conditions would apply to the property:

1. *Maximum Height.* No building shall exceed 20 stories in height. Story height as defined in article XII of the City Zoning Ordinance shall be not less than ten feet and not greater than 15 feet, except that ground floor stories may be of greater height.
2. *Pedestrian Path.* Any improvements constructed on the property will be compatible with the City's goal of establishing and maintaining a future pedestrian path area as a public amenity allowing recreation areas for walking, jogging, biking, fishing and other similar purposes along Walker's Creek.

3. *Parking Deck and Garages.* The ground floor of any building facing Walker's Creek shall have dwelling units or commercial uses facing Walker's Creek and to the extent any areas adjacent to such buildings are used for permanent parking spaces or drive aisles, such parking spaces and drive aisles shall be screened from public view at the ground level fronting Walker's Creek.

Surrounding Area

The properties are currently located in the RF-1 Riverfront District. Properties to the north are also located in the RF-1 District. Properties to the south are in the M-2 Heavy Industrial District. A mix of vacant and industrial sites are present in the vicinity of the subject property.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff has not received any letters of support or opposition to this application.

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