

From: [Zeke Brody](#)
To: [Palmquist, William D. - PDR](#)
Subject: Pulse Corridor Plan Comments
Date: Monday, April 10, 2017 11:36:04 AM

Hi Mr. Palmquist,

I recently reviewed the Pulse Corridor Plan. In general I think the principles and proposed zoning are great examples of urban design that we will need to stick to in order to make the Pulse work well as a rapid transit line.

I support the increased density of all the station area proposals. I think that wherever possible, parking minimums should be taken out of the zoning code. I agree that what parking exists should be mid block or behind buildings, or better structured or underground.

As a Carillon resident, I and my neighbors will be taking connecting buses, walking, or biking to take the Pulse; so pedestrian connection and safety are top priorities for us.

The City and GRTC should continue to push Henrico county to "upzone" the Willow Lawn area; it will help anchor the Pulse and generate rides.

I appreciate all your hard work; this plan is crucial to success of the line. Looking forward to riding!

Regards,
Zeke Brody

--

Zeke Brody
703.964.7749 cell
804.274.1457 work
zeke.brody@gmail.com

From: [Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR](#)
To: [Olinger, Mark A. - PDR](#); [Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR](#); [Palmquist, William D. - PDR](#)
Subject: FW: Pulse Corridor Plan - Land Use Overlay
Date: Monday, April 10, 2017 12:41:24 PM

FYI

Matthew J. Ebinger, AICP

Acting Principal Planner - Land Use Administration | Acting Secretary to the Planning Commission
| Department of Planning & Development Review | City of Richmond |
Matthew.Ebinger@RichmondGov.com | 804-646-6308

From: MacMarion@aol.com [<mailto:MacMarion@aol.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2017 10:00 AM
To: Rodney@thewiltonco.com; lawmanchem@yahoo.com; jthompson@richmondhabitat.org; Cuffee-Glenn, Selena - CAO; Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council; Stokes, Kiya A. - City Council Office; egreenfield@RARealtors.com; max@sportsbackers.org; dave@johannasdesign.com; murthyvg@gmail.com; Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR
Subject: Pulse Corridor Plan - Land Use Overlay

Dear Planning Commission Members,

Thank you for the long hours and diligent work to make our City a better place..

Below are some concerns regarding the Pulse Corridor Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

-
1. Request that deliberations be slowed down on the Land Use Overlay Pulse Corridor Pan. The proposal is very **information dense** and needs thorough study and ramifications spelled out - particularly as regards view sheds from public spaces, Grace Street Overlook, Jefferson Park and The View from Libby Hill Park.
 2. **Plan's out-of-proportion with heights in Shockoe Valley** The valley is full of historic sites. The building are historically no taller than three to four stores. The proposed plan has heights as high as thirteen stories. Others notes as a minimum ofListed only as minimums. These should be maximum limiters - no taller than four stories around historic sites. Main St station is the striking

handsome exception that proves the rule.

3. **The plan does not give clarity to developers.** As it is written it will not make the development process more stream line less costly nor reduce the work load of planning staff, the commission or city council. It will not limit the number of SUP's that **flood the desks of city planning staff, planning commission nor city council.** Nor will it work to involve citizens in productive collaboration to make Richmond the best it can be.
4. **Heights should be specified in maximums.** Currently the plan language in many cases is specified in vague metrics. An example is - ' a minimum of five stories.' From a planning perspective it is hard to make decisions or assess the impact of that directive.
5. **Timing is off with other plans in the area.** The current city- lead effort to envision the 9-acre **Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park** project as defined by the public conversations and the Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project and the SmithGroup's efforts is just beginning . No overlay should be applied to that part of the valley before more is known about regarding the future of the Devils half acre (Lumpkin's Jail archaeological site).

Thank you for your dedicated, thorough leadership on behalf of the citizens of Richmond

Coqui Macdonald

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Scenic Virginia

To Preserve, Protect, and Enhance the Scenic Beauty of Virginia

April 10, 2017

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Coordinator

Mr. William Palmquist
Department of Planning & Development Review
City of Richmond
900 East Broad Street, 5th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Re: Comments on the Pulse Corridor Plan (draft 3/29/17)

Dear Mr. Palmquist:

Scenic Virginia is the sole statewide conservation organization dedicated to the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the scenic beauty of our Commonwealth, with a particular focus on the preservation of significant views and vistas.

Given that the view from Mr. Jefferson's Capitol down to the James was destroyed many years ago, Virginia's most significant existing viewshed is the one of the James River from Libby Hill Park in Church Hill. This vista – known as “The View That Named Richmond” for its important role in the naming of our city by William Byrd II – is widely beloved and cherished. People of all backgrounds gather there every day to enjoy the iconic bend and sweep of the James, so similar to the view of the River Thames from Richmond Hill in Richmond-upon-Thames, our city's namesake.

Scenic Virginia understands that density is an important feature of the Pulse. There are several areas along the Pulse Corridor that call for greater density and that can accommodate increased height. The East Riverfront section, though, is not one of them. Development there must proceed carefully and with great thought due to the importance of the views that would be affected by inappropriately tall development.

The draft of the Pulse Plan dated March 29, 2017 mentions -- almost in passing -- that the important historic vistas from Libby Hill Park are referenced in the Downtown Plan and Riverfront Plan. The Pulse Plan, though, does not go far enough in stating the historical significance of The View, nor does it provide guidance specific enough to ensure that The View is preserved.

In numerous conversations that I've had about The View with Richmond's Planning Director, Mark Olinger, I've described the passion expressed by the thousands of Richmonders who participated in the development of the Downtown Plan, which started just about a decade ago. Citizens turned out, again and again, to demand that The View be preserved and that the City acquire the USP parcel for a riverfront park. The debate over The View held up passage of the Downtown Plan for a full year. Acquisition of the USP parcel was the #3 priority for the City cited in the Downtown Plan, but to date, there has been no City action to acquire the land. (Worse still, I can cite several actions by Planning staff over the past eight years that completely fly in the face of the wishes expressed by the public in both Plans regarding the USP site.)

Language denoting the importance of the views from Libby Hill Park was stated clearly in the Downtown Master Plan and later reiterated in the Riverfront Plan. A chapter on Scenic Resources was moved closer to the front in the second document to signify their importance when discussing future development of the riverfront. Similar language should be included in the Pulse Corridor Plan (and in the Down River portion of the Riverfront Plan, while we're at it). It would also be extremely helpful for the Pulse Corridor Plan to feature a visualization of the effects on The View by development as currently proposed for the parcels north of the realigned Dock Street in the East Riverfront section.

During a tour of the riverfront last summer, then-Mayoral candidate Levar Stoney stated emphatically that connectivity is what is most lacking along this stretch of the James. I enthusiastically agree, and I believe that a thoughtful and balanced approach to the East Riverfront section – one that respects views, connects The Low Line to Rocketts Landing, and provides for safer pedestrian and biking opportunities -- will benefit the City as a whole and allow desired growth to occur organically.

Scenic Virginia has spoken with several Council members about the need for a scenic overlay district for the area in the viewshed of The View to ensure that all future development -- including that associated with the Pulse Plan -- is deferential to the views from Libby Hill. The response to date has been positive, and we again urge Planning staff to proceed with extra deliberation with regard to the East Riverfront portion of the Pulse Corridor Plan.

The Pulse can be a great addition to the City of Richmond if implemented correctly. We can have Bus Rapid Transit and retain our Capital City's history and scenic beauty.

Scenic Virginia thanks you for the opportunity to be heard. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Leighton Powell
Executive Director

From: [Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR](#)
To: [Palmquist, William D. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Olinger, Mark A. - PDR](#)
Subject: FW: Museum District Association weighs in on Master Plan/BRT Corridor
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 8:56:49 AM

For inclusion.

From: Margaret A. Powers [mailto:magpowers2014@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 6:11 AM
To: Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR
Cc: JOHN.REYNA@HOTMAIL.COM; Versen, Stephen (VDACS)
Subject: Museum District Association weighs in on Master Plan/BRT Corridor

The Museum District Association has reviewed the portion of the master plan that relates to changes in land use along the BRT corridor on Broad Street between Boulevard and Thompson. The MDA is not opposed to the master plan as it relates to the identified corridor.

When pursuing rezoning of the area, The Museum District Association Board of Directors requests the following:

1. The south side of Broad Street between Boulevard and Thompson Street maintain a density lower than the north side of Broad Street/Scott's Addition.
2. The south side of Broad Street between Boulevard and Thompson Street maintain a building height lower than the north side of Broad Street/Scott's Addition.

Sincerely,

Margaret A Powers
Museum District Association President

From: [The Woodwards](#)
To: [Palmquist, William D. - PDR](#)
Subject: Concerns about Pulse Corridor Plan
Date: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 9:51:12 PM

Dear Planning Commission,

Through the West Grace Street Association, I understand Mark Olinger, the Director of Planning and Development, is scheduled to give presentations of the Pulse Corridor Plan. As currently written, the plan includes proposed zoning that would allow buildings of more than four stories on West Broad Street, in the blocks between Ryland and The Boulevard, directly across the alley on the north side Grace Street.

My husband and I have lived on West Grace Street for 43 years. We have renovated, resided in and own two properties in the 2000 block. Years ago, my husband volunteered to work on the renovation of 1810, a joint project of the FDA and WGSA. We've both served on the board of the WGSA. We are grateful to have witnessed and been a part of a tremendous change along West Grace, from Meadow to the Boulevard. What was once a neighborhood of crack houses and prostitution is now a peaceful, residential area of families with young children, college-age children, university students, young professionals, adult homes, condos, apartment houses and empty-nesters, like us. West Grace is a great example of diverse, healthy urban living.

Building of more than four stories along Broad St would dwarf this historic neighborhood, changing it dramatically. Buildings of such heights would block views of the sky and precious light coming into our yards and homes, altering the tone from a residential, human scale (inviting and sustaining) to an inhospitable, commercial scale. The change in zoning to build any higher than four stories along Broad Street would not be acceptable or sustainable for the neighborhood.

My husband is a master carpenter who has worked on many historic properties in Richmond (the Governor's Mansion, Monumental Church, St. John's Church, the Lockwood House, and private historic homes). We both have read and experienced the effects cited in numerous studies about the effect of building height on humans: buildings up to four stories encourage and support thriving, inviting, accessible communities in which to live, work, shop and play. Buildings five stories and higher create a sterile, uninviting, commercial environment, with adverse effects.

I ask that you support zoning that will keep buildings along Broad Street to four stories or less.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Deborah and Arthur Woodward
2039 West Grace Street, 23220
804.338.1105

From: [Jonathan Marcus](#)
To: [Palmquist, William D. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Bill Gallasch](#); [Brian Baird](#); [Katherine J.](#); [Kimberly Gray](#); [Bieber, Craig K. - City Council Office](#)
Subject: Please postpone the vote on Pulse Corridor Plan
Date: Sunday, April 16, 2017 12:33:53 PM
Attachments: [Pulse Corridor Plan Meeting 1-16-17.docx](#)

To the Planning Commission, City of Richmond:

The West Grace Street Association supports commercial growth on West Broad Street, and we support the general concept of the "Corridor Mixed Use" designation in the proposed Pulse Corridor Plan.

However, the Pulse Corridor Plan includes zoning recommendations which are opposed by the Fan District Association, Monument Avenue Preservation Society, and the WGSA because the recommendations do not comply with either the Old and Historic designation of West Grace Street nor with the broader context of the Fan District.

While the specific concerns - especially the height limit on buildings on the south side of Broad Street between Lombardy and the Boulevard - have been discussed and modified in conversation with Mark Olinger, the content of the conversations have not been included in the language of the proposed plan. Specifically, the height limit as discussed does not appear in the plan.

For the record, the FDA, MAPS, and WGSA all agree that the height limit in these blocks should be forty-five feet, with possible exceptions for certain intersections.

We see no reason for this plan to be rushed through the review process before it is appropriately reviewed and vetted and approved by the tax paying citizens who have invested decades in stabilizing these downtown neighborhoods so that they have become viable areas for renewed commercial development.

Therefore, we request that the Planning Commission delay the vote until the language in the plan being voted on accurately represents the issues of critical concern to all affected stakeholders.

Please review the attached email sent to Mark Olinger et. al. following a meeting in January, and please note that no reply was received.

Thank you for your continuing due diligence in reviewing this plan which will affect our city for decades. First, let's get it right. And then, let's proceed together.

**Respectfully yours,
Jonathan Marcus
President, West Grace Street Association**

Kim Gray, Richmond City Council
Craig Beiber, City Council Liaison
Mark Olinger, Director, Department of Planning
Lory Markham, Department of Planning
Will Palmquist, Department of Planning
Yessinia Revilla, Department of Planning

January 18, 2017

Hello Kim, Craig, Mark, Lory, Will and Yessinia,

The West Grace Street Association thanks each of you for your time and consideration in our December and January meetings regarding the zoning proposals in the Pulse Corridor Plan.

In the spirit of our collaboration, we are pleased to review the broad points on which we have already reached agreement:

- Most importantly, the West Grace Street Association supports development on Broad Street. Specifically, we support Mark Olinger's goal of making our Broad Street a great urban destination, and we are prepared to work with the Planning Commission in formulating a zoning proposal that will foster that commercial growth.
- At the same time, we all agree that any zoning proposals must also protect the resident-driven revitalization of West Grace Street and the entire Fan District, and particularly the Old and Historic zoning on West Grace Street.
- The nine block section of the south side Broad Street from Ryland Street to the Boulevard will receive a separate zoning designation, as it is the only such section of the \pm 7 mile Pulse Corridor in which an Old and Historic neighborhood shares an alley with commercial property on Broad Street.
- The zoning proposal for the nine block area under discussion will be in writing.

The specifics on which already agree include:

- The existing 20 foot alley setback will remain in place in the new zoning proposal.
- An additional rear "step-back" requirement will be included in the new zoning proposal in which floors above the first must recede an additional distance (to be determined) from the alley.
- The proposed zoning will require all new construction in this designated nine block area to provide on-site parking (specifics to be determined).

A number of elements in the proposed zoning remain under discussion. We look forward to achieving full agreement. The first step in that process will be visiting the

nine blocks in question: during an on site walk of the area (to be scheduled), Mark Olinger and others from the Planning Department will join West Grace Street board members and residents to consider these issues:

- The Fan District Association, The Monument Avenue Preservation Society, and the West Grace Association all agree that the maximum height for any new construction in the nine block area should be 45 feet. The Planning Department suggests that certain sites in the designated area should allow for taller buildings. These specific sites will be considered when we walk the area together.
- The Old and Historic features of the nine block area are mentioned in the proposed zoning but the enactment of the principle needs to be specified.
- Perhaps the thorniest issue to resolve in the proposed zoning is the condition and use of the alley between West Grace Street and Broad Street. The alleys are too small and too congested even for their current uses. Adding more traffic will render the alleys unusable to residents and will not comply with the Old and Historic guidelines. Loading and unloading in the commercial spaces must be done in the setback space or in a way that does not impede resident usage or create additional noise and traffic.
The possibility of widening the alley to accommodate greater commercial use is extremely problematic for many reasons, but especially because eight of the nine alleys currently contain buildings on the rear property line at the border of the alley.

We welcome any and all feedback, suggestions and questions on this summary of our process to date from all participants in the process. And we thank you again for your time and attention.

We especially look forward to the invitation from Mark Olinger and the Planning Department to walk the nine block area so that we may collaborate on full agreement.

With kindest regards,
Jonathan
Jonathan Marcus
President, West Grace Street Association

BCC:
Bill Gallasch, President of MAPS
Brian Baird, President of FDA
Chris Baum, WGSA
Lisa Hahn, WGSA
Kerthy Hearn, WGSA

Sandra Leibowitz, WGSA
Jean Matherne, WGSA
Elsa Woodaman, WGSA
Rex Scudder, WGSA
Mike Bell, WGSA
Anna Bell, WGSA
Mark Terrill, WGSA
David Smith, WGSA

From: [kerthy.hearn](#)
To: [Palmquist, William D. - PDR](#)
Subject: Pulse Corridor Master Plan
Date: Sunday, April 16, 2017 2:39:22 PM

I urge the Planning Commission to delay a vote on the Pulse Corridor Plan until Mark Olinger has included the promised agreement with WGSA regarding the height of buildings on the south side of Broad from Lombardy to Boulevard. Our eight blocks are an Old and Historic district, unique in the corridor, and should have a plan that protects our neighborhood.

WGSA, MAPS, and FDA are requesting a 45 foot height limit, already a compromise on our part, since the current limit is twenty-eight feet.

It is important to take the time to develop a plan that enhances the charm of Richmond and our neighborhood, rather than rush to approve a flawed plan. Surely we can do this.

Kerthy Hearn
1608A West Grace

From: [David Smith](#)
To: [Palmquist, William D. - PDR](#); [Olinger, Mark A. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Kimberly Gray](#); [Bieber, Craig K. - City Council Office](#); [Jonathan Marcus \(jonmarcus59@gmail.com\)](mailto:jonmarcus59@gmail.com)
Subject: Material to provide to the Planning Commission for today's meeting
Date: Monday, April 17, 2017 9:31:09 AM
Attachments: [Proposed revisions to Science Museum and Allison Street Station Areas Descriptions - REV 2.docx](#)

Mr. Palmquist,

We meant to put this in your hands last week but, through a miscommunication, we failed to do so. If it is not too late, we would like for the attached comments to be provided to the members of the Planning Commission for this afternoon's meeting. The attached document represents proposed changes to the wording in the Pulse Corridor Plan as it relates to the Science Museum and Allison Street Station areas.

In a conversation we had with Mr. Olinger, he suggested that we provide some revisions to that language that would address our concerns.

Thank you,

David Smith

David Smith | Senior Vice President, Risk Management

REM

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SCIENCE MUSEUM & ALLISON STREET STATION AREAS

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The majority of this station area is designated as either a City Old & Historic District, or a National Register Historic District, as shown in Figure 4.25. West Grace Street between Lombardy and the Boulevard is a City Old & Historic District that shares the alley with the South side of West Broad Street. City Old & Historic Districts require exterior changes to buildings to go through the City's Commission of Architectural Review while National Register Historic Districts provide federal and state historic tax credits for historic renovations which are reviewed by the National Park Service.

FUTURE LAND USE

The Nodal Mixed-Uses at the W. Broad Street / Boulevard gateway generate a critical mass of people at a premier entrance to the city, as shown in Figure 4.27. Low-intensity, automobile-oriented uses are replaced with a mix of uses, signature dense architecture, and walkable urban fabric. The Institutional land uses north of W. Broad Street enhance the cultural destinations by replacing surface parking with uses that engage pedestrians and providing connections across the large parcels. The Nodal Mixed-Uses on the north side of W. Broad Street will enable transformative redevelopment to an urban, mid-rise area. Both the Institutional and Nodal Mixed-Use areas north of W. Broad Street will be further studied through a small area plan.

The Corridor Mixed-Use area on the south side of W. Broad Street envisions more limited redevelopment at a smaller scale and height. New infill development should be limited in scope, prioritizing the preservation of significant historic buildings that embody the form and function of Corridor Mixed-Use. Redevelopment occurs on sites with auto-oriented uses and deep setbacks that currently disrupt the historic pattern of the street-oriented commercial corridor. With regard to the south side of West Broad from Strawberry Street to Ryland, the homeowners on West Grace will be heavily impacted by any development due to close proximity and extremely narrow alleyways. The West Grace Street Association, The Fan District Association and the Monument Avenue Preservation Society all weighed in with opposition to any new development in excess of four stories. Planning staff agreed with that limitation and the need for a unique zoning designation to further describe it. The West Grace Street Association additionally requested that new zoning specify a maximum height in feet along with on-site parking requirements, a step from four stories to three at the rear of the buildings and waste removal facilities to be contained within the buildings. A twenty foot set-back is assumed to apply based on current zoning law.

Discussions were also held with the West Grace Street Association with regard to the stretch of the south side of West Broad Street that runs west from Strawberry Street to the Boulevard. Larger lots, a much wider alley and a number of either empty lots or insignificant buildings together support the potential for larger developments. A variation of one of the existing business zoning ordinances could be used for this stretch with heights in general limited to five stories (with exceptions to be determined in conjunction with the three adjoining neighborhood associations at the time of rezoning) and with requirements for the height to be stepped up from back to front. A variation in building heights along the front facades will also need to be a requirement of the zoning to prevent the presentation of a solid wall of buildings. This new development should be limited to lower heights, except in special cases with extensive community input and on prominent gateway corner sites on W. Broad Street, at such as Robinson Street and at the Boulevard will present opportunities for further exceptions to height to be determined with input from the neighborhoods.



Mark Olinger
Director of Planning and Development Review
City of Richmond
900 E. Broad Street, Room 511
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Director Olinger:

This letter follows our recent letter dated, March 22, 2017 where we made comments and recommendations related to the Pulse Corridor Plan and update to the Riverfront Plan. As comments to planning staff are due by April 10, 2017, we would like to reiterate our position as to how both plans might potentially affect Church Hill.

As you are aware, protecting the historic viewshed from Libby Hill Park, while supporting height-appropriate development in this area continues to be at the forefront of our concern as the Pulse Corridor Plan advances. As we stated previously, we are encouraged by the recent staff recommendation changing the original Nodal designation to Neighborhood below Libby Hill Park near the East Riverfront BRT station. We are further encouraged that building heights will be determined by a city-initiated zoning process, which will allow for additional study and public comment regarding appropriate building heights as it relates to development in this section of the Pulse Corridor.

While these are positive amendments, there is still no specific language incorporated into the planning documents that outlines the importance of protecting the views from Libby Hill Park, and the Grace Street Overlook. The value of these views cannot be overstated and we would again request the following recommendations be incorporated into final drafts of the Pulse Corridor and Riverfront Plans:

1. Specific language be added to both the general description section and Station Area specific implementation recommendations that identify reasons why protecting these viewsheds should be a paramount consideration, including:
 - a. In 1851, Libby Hill Park was recognized as significant for its views and selected as a public location to highlight these views.

- b. Economic activity generated by this location that brings countless tourists, both local and beyond to learn Richmond's founding history, not to mention serving as a chosen site for weddings and various public festivals and functions specifically for the view.

Much of this language about the importance of the view from Libby Hill Park was stated clearly in the Downtown Master Plan and should be reintroduced into the Pulse Corridor Plan and Riverfront Plans in order to emphasize the critical relationship between the viewshed and the height of the buildings below, specifically buildings in the foreground in these areas:

- Parcels between Libby Hill and the river and Pear Street and Nicholson Street, including the Fulton Gas Works, the bus company, USP/Echo Harbor, and the land between Main Street and the CSX trestle east of the future roundabout
 - Parcels along and between Libby Hill Park and 21st Street along Main Street and Franklin Street
 - Parcels in the foreground of the Grace Street Overlook
2. Add specific language from the Downtown Master Plan identifying the USP / Echo Harbor parcel for potential inclusion in the James River Park system. As stated previously, and preferred by the general public, the CHA supports a continuous park from the Low Line to Rocketts Landing to allow the maximum public park space and access along the James River. The maps should show the USP / Echo Harbor parcel with green hatching to indicate the potential park.
 3. Maps in the Pulse Corridor Plan should include approximate viewshed lines running from Libby Terrace to Rocketts Landing to the east, and along Main Street to the west. Additionally, viewshed lines from the Grace Street Overlook onto Shockoe Bottom below should also be included. Having the graphic representation of the viewshed lines superimposed on plan maps will support language stating the importance of these critical viewsheds and emphasize the need for language stating actual building heights that consider and protect these viewsheds.

There is a unique opportunity in this planning process to guide the correct balance between appropriate development, historic preservation and protection of Richmond's critical viewsheds. We believe our recommendations for the Pulse Corridor and Riverfront Plans help strike the proper balance and again request they be incorporated into final drafts and this process advances.

Sincerely,

John Sieg – President Church Hill Association of RVA