



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

CPCR.2019.104: TO DECLARE AN INTENT TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP FOR THE PURPOSE OF REZONING CERTAIN PROPERTIES IN THE AREAS SURROUNDING THE SCIENCE MUSEUM, ALLISON STREET, AND VCU/VUU BRT PULSE STATIONS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VISION OF THE PULSE CORRIDOR PLAN.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Department of Planning and Development Review
Date: October 21, 2019

PETITIONER

City of Richmond, Department of Planning and Development Review

LOCATION

The study area, containing the Science Museum, Allison Street, and VCU & VUU Stations, is consistent with the boundaries of the Future Land Use map in the Pulse Corridor Plan, and lies on both sides of Broad Street bounded on the west by Arthur Ashe Jr, Boulevard, to the east by Belvidere Street, to the north by the railroad and I-95/64, and to the south by the alley between Broad and Grace Streets.

PURPOSE

To amend the official zoning map for the purpose of rezoning this area to meet the vision outlined by the Pulse Corridor Plan.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This Resolution of Intent is to initiate the process of rezoning this area to align with the Future Land Use recommendations of the Pulse Corridor Plan. The rezoning area is varied in its current land use, from residential to light industrial; the rezoning will allow greater density and variety of use, paving the way for transit-oriented development, while maintaining the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods. This rezoning follows the Cleveland Station/Scott's Addition rezoning and the Arts District Station/Monroe Ward rezoning, and when adopted will complete a stretch of Pulse Plan-appropriate zoning along the corridor from I-195 to Ninth Street.

After adoption of this Resolution, PDR staff will arrange to meet with civic groups, property-owners and institutions in the area, as well as hold two public open houses to garner feedback about the proposed rezoning.

Staff supports the resolution.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Background

This Resolution of Intent is to initiate the process of rezoning this area, in order to implement the next phase of implementing the Pulse Corridor Plan.

Master Plan

The area for this rezoning is comprised of the Science Museum, Allison Street, and VCU & VUU Pulse Station Areas, and is consistent with the Future Land Use map in the Pulse Corridor Plan. The Pulse Corridor Plan is an adopted amendment to the Richmond City Master Plan.

The Pulse Corridor Plan prioritizes certain station areas based on market conditions, development readiness and pedestrian orientation. The Science Museum and the Allison Street Station areas are among the six Priority Stations, and the VCU & VUU Station area is also labeled as an Emerging Station. Though the VCU & VUU Station area is not labeled as Priority, staff is proposing including all three together in this rezoning in order to complete one uninterrupted corridor of zoning appropriate to transit-oriented development from I-195 to Ninth Street.

Rezoning station areas to zoning classifications that align with the future land use map and creating a Plan of Development Overlay District are the first two corridor-wide recommendations included in the Pulse Corridor Plan. Staff also recommends creating a Plan of Development Overlay District as part of this rezoning, which is the first recommendation of the Pulse Corridor Plan.

The Plan makes recommendations for the Science Museum and Allison stations together, noting that in the area there are 8.2 acres of vacant land and 120 acres of underperforming land suitable for redevelopment. The area has a significant number of surface parking lots, which will also be appropriate for redevelopment as transit use increases. For the Science Museum Station, the Plan envisions major redevelopment including “new, taller mixed-use development that promotes walkability” and a “high-quality urban avenue” across from the Science Museum. For the Allison Street Station area, the Plan envisions major development that breaks up super blocks and re-introduces the street grid to create a walkable, high-density, mixed-use neighborhood. In both station areas, “the preservation of historic building stock and adequate buffers to residential neighborhoods is a priority”.

The Pulse Corridor Plan envisions that the VCU & VUU Station area along Broad Street continues to thrive and develop, adding greater building height with commercial uses on the ground floor. Neighborhood mixed-uses in Carver support the existing medium-density residential development while allowing corner commercial and multi-family residential uses where appropriate.

Existing and Proposed Zoning

Staff has created a proposal for the rezoning, which will be vetted in conversations with property owners and civic groups. See draft map included with this staff report.

The large parcels zoned M-1 to the north of Broad Street will be rezoned to a district that allows greater height and intensity of use; B-4 is proposed. Along Broad Street's south side, the zoning will allow more height without overwhelming residential districts on Grace Street; a combination of UB-2, B-5 and TOD-1 is proposed. The area that is currently zoned B-4 will remain as such, and the residential areas will remain so. Any alterations of zoning in residential areas (Newtowne West and Carver) will be aimed at protecting neighborhood character better than the existing zoning does.

Most likely, a combination of the following will be included in the final proposal:

1. Rezoning of parcels to districts that are consistent with a dense, walkable, transit-oriented neighborhood;
2. Creation of a Plan of Development Overlay District in which each development will be evaluated according to the six form elements of the Pulse Corridor Plan;
3. Addition of Priority and Street-Oriented Commercial street designations; and
4. Adjustment of residential zoning districts if necessary to ensure zoning fits with existing neighborhood form.

Attached Map

Please see attached for a draft map of the rezoning, from existing to proposed districts.

Public Engagement

As the Pulse Corridor Plan was developed over the course of 2015-2017, City Staff held numerous public forums, set up online surveys, attended standing civic association meetings, and tracked public feedback.

After adoption of this Resolution of Intent, PDR staff will meet with property owners and civic groups, and arrange two public open houses to discuss the rezoning before presenting a final proposal to the Planning Commission.

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