



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2019-210: To conditionally rezone the properties known as 25 Nicholson Street and a portion of 101 Nicholson Street from the M-2 Heavy Industrial District to the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District (Conditional), upon certain proffered conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: September 3, 2019

PETITIONER

Ann Neil Cosby, McGuireWoods, LLP

LOCATION

25 Nicholson Street and a portion of 101 Nicholson Street

PURPOSE

To conditionally rezone the properties known as 25 Nicholson Street and a portion of 101 Nicholson Street from the M-2 Heavy Industrial District to the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District (Conditional), upon certain proffered conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately 1.3 acres from the M-2 Heavy Industrial District to the B-7 Mixed-Use District in order to allow the development of the property with a five-story commercial/office building and surface parking.

The subject properties are located in the Greater Fulton Neighborhood and the Riverfront Station area of the Pulse Corridor Plan.

Staff finds the proposed zoning district to be appropriate for the property. The proposed rezoning would enable infill development that is consistent with the Pulse Corridor Plan land use recommendation for the property, and would contribute to accomplishing the Riverfront Station Vision.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of this rezoning request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject properties consist of approximately 1.3 acres of vacant land located in the Greater Fulton Neighborhood and the Riverfront Station area of the Pulse Corridor Plan, along Nicholson Street, between East Main Street and CSX rail lines.

Proposed Use of Property

The rezoning of the property to the B-7 Mixed Use District will allow the construction of a five-story mixed-use building containing offices and ground-level retail. Site amenities such as an RVA bike share station, Uber/Lyft pick up area, covered bike parking, and a bike repair station are also proposed.

Master Plan

The City of Richmond's Pulse Corridor Plan designates the subject property for Neighborhood Mixed-Uses. Neighborhood Mixed-use areas are cohesive districts that provide a mix of uses, but with a larger amount of residential uses than other mixed-use districts. They are an urban, walkable environment with limited neighborhood-oriented uses incorporated along key commercial corridors and at corner sites. The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas will vary depending on historic densities and neighborhood characteristics.

New development should be in scale with existing context. Regardless of use, buildings should have street-oriented facades with windows and door openings along street frontages. Appropriate setbacks and open space should be provided for residential uses. New driveway entrances prohibited on priority streets. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys where possible. Parking lots and parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings. The B-7 Mixed-Use Business District is consistent with this designation.

The Pulse Plan Riverfront Station Vision states "The Orleans Station Area is a dense, walkable destination for workers, residents, and visitors. Residents of Greater Fulton easily access the terminus station via Orleans Street which is a 'great street' featuring active ground floor uses and a walkable environment" (p. 124).

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The conditional rezoning to B-7 Mixed Use Business will enable the development of the property with a five-story building of approximately 20,000 square feet of floor area, divided between retail and office uses. A long narrow portion of land noted as a portion of 101 Nicholson Street will be utilized as landscaped surface parking.

The B-7 district regulations are intended to encourage appropriate infill development on undeveloped land, promote adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings and enable redevelopment of properties where continuation of current uses or adaptive reuse is not feasible. The district regulations are also intended to safeguard the character of adjoining properties, to maintain the predominant existing streetscape character by providing continuity of building scale and setbacks, to enhance public safety and encourage an active pedestrian environment appropriate to the mixed-use character of the district by providing for windows in building facades along street frontages. Finally, the district regulations are intended to assure adequate accessible parking and safe vehicular and pedestrian circulation, to facilitate a streetscape with minimum setbacks along principal street frontages and to provide for limited interruption by driveways and vehicular traffic across public sidewalk areas along principal street frontages.

The development requirements of the B-7 district, including a mix of permitted uses, setbacks, screening, parking areas, height, and building façade fenestration, would apply to the property.

The proffered conditions attached to the proposed rezoning ordinance would also apply to the development of the subject property.

Surrounding Area

The properties located to the north, across Nicholson Street, are owned by the Richmond Economic Development Authority and contain the Stone Brewery complex and associated surface parking. The properties are in the M-1 Light Industrial District. The CSX rail corridor abuts to the east and contains tandem elevated rail lines. Office uses are located on the property abutting to the west, which is located in the RF-2 Riverfront District.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Shockoe Partnership, Greater Fulton Hill Civic Association, and adjacent property owners of the proposed rezoning. No letters of support or opposition have been received.

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