



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

**Ord. No. 2023-271:** To conditionally rezone the properties known as 2500, 2510, 2516, 2530, 2532, 2534, and 2536 North Lombardy Street from the UB-2 Urban Business District to the TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal District, upon certain proffered conditions.

**Ord. No. 2023-266:** To authorize the special use of the properties known as 2500, 2510, 2516, 2530, 2532, 2534, and 2536 North Lombardy Street for the purpose of exceeding the inclined plane height for a mixed-use building, upon certain terms and conditions.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

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#### **PETITIONER**

Jeffrey Geiger, Hirschler Fleischler

#### **LOCATION**

2500, 2510, 2516, 2530, 2532, 2534, and 2536 North Lombardy Street

#### **PURPOSE**

To conditionally rezone the subject properties from the UB-2 Urban Business District to the TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal District and to authorize a Special Use Permit to allow the subsequent development to exceed the inclined plane height for a mixed-use building.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The applicant is requesting a rezoning for the properties at 2500, 2510, 2516, 2530, 2532, 2534, and 2536 North Lombardy Street from the UB-2 Urban Business District to the TOD-1 Transit Oriented Nodal District, subject to the provisions of sections 30-457.1 through 30-457.10, of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.

Additionally, the applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize a mixed-use building within the TOD-1 Transit Oriented Nodal District. While the mixed-use building is a permitted use, the inclined plane requirements outlined in Sec. 30-457.9. - Height. of the Code of the City of Richmond cannot be met.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Master Plan pertaining to the Corridor Mixed-Use land use category. The parcels are along Lombardy Street, which is defined in the Master Plan as a Major Mixed-Use Street. Corridor Mixed-Use and Major Mixed-Use Streets both have characteristics that align with the TOD-1 zone, such as mixed-uses, higher densities, building setbacks and heights, and access management.

Staff finds that rezoning to TOD-1 will provide development opportunities along a designated Major Mixed-Use Street. These streets seek to provide much higher densities with the goal of creating highly attractive pedestrian environments.

Staff further finds that TOD-1 aligns well with the objectives of the Richmond 300 Master Plan designated Neighborhood Priority Growth Nodes. The subject property is located within the VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Node. These nodes are recognized as requiring zoning which allows for relatively high density and mixed-use development similar to that of TOD-1. The proffers assure that the building will not exceed a height of 85' and that the building wall on the top story shall be stepped back at least five feet from the primary building wall on each side of the building.

Additionally, staff finds that, only a portion of the building will penetrate the inclined plane, which will allow for the proper screening of parking areas. The City's Master Plan recommends that, "Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening" (Richmond 300, p. 60). By allowing the building to slightly penetrate the inclined plane, the parking area will be adequately screened from the ROW.

Staff finds that, with the ordinance conditions, the safeguards contained within the City Charter relative to the granting of special use permits are met. Specifically, staff finds that the proposed use would not be detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved and would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Rezoning and Special Use Permit requests.

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The properties known as 2500, 2510, 2516, 2530, 2532, 2534, and 2536 North Lombardy Street total approximately 1.66 acres. The properties are in the Virginia Union neighborhood between Overbrook Road and Chamberlayne Avenue.

### **Proposed Use of the Property**

A mixed-use building.

### **Master Plan**

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject properties as Corridor Mixed-Use, which is found along major commercial corridors and envisioned to provide for medium- to medium high-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development.

**Development Style:** The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary significantly depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Uses may be mixed horizontally in several buildings on a block or vertically within the same building. Developments continue introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity.

**Ground Floor:** 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.

**Mobility:** Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be off alleys whenever possible; new driveways

are prohibited on priority and principal streets. Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening; shared parking requirements are encouraged.

Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to ten stories, based on street widths, and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas. New buildings that are taller than historical buildings should step back from the build-to line after matching the height of the predominant cornice line of the block.

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

Secondary Uses: Single-family houses, institutional, and government.

The Richmond 300 Master Plan also designates the subject area as the VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Node.

Vision: The VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Plan (2015) established a future vision for this Node through extensive community input: “Lombardy between Brook and Chamberlayne is an ideal location for a pedestrian-friendly retail and shopping district. Today, an overabundance of automobile- oriented uses, parking lots, and vacant buildings discourage the development of a strong connection between the surrounding neighborhoods and the commercial area. Lombardy and adjacent streets should be changed to allow on-street parking, streetscaping, pedestrian lighting and signage. Curb cuts should be reduced to better control vehicular movement, and parking areas should be created behind buildings and in public lots. New commercial buildings with storefronts can be located along Lombardy and selected historic buildings can be reused for shops and restaurants. The focus of the district will be a new public square at the intersection of Lombardy and Overbrook that will feature attractive landscaping and public art.”

The property is located on a designated Major Mixed-Use Street. The streets typologies are to have the following characteristics:

- 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 and Ordinance Conditions**

The rezoning would be subject to the following proffered conditions:

1. Height – No building on the Property may exceed eighty-five feet (85’) in height.
2. Architecture – The building constructed on the Property shall be in general conformance with one or more of the Inspiration Pictures and Illustrative Building Mass Diagrams, attached (see case file), and prepared by 510 Architects. These illustrations are conceptual in nature and may vary in detail. In the event a building’s construction plans

are not in general conformance with the foregoing, deviations may be approved at any plan of development review period or any other time permitted by the Director of Planning upon the Director finding that the deviations are generally in keeping with the spirit and concept of the illustrations.

3. Building Materials – All buildings shall have exposed exterior siding (above grade and exclusive of trim, which may be metal, wood, or vinyl) of stone, cultured stone, stone veneer, brick, brick veneer, E.I.F.S., cementitious siding (e.g. Hardi-plank), glass, tiles, tilt-up panels decorative metal panels, other masonry materials, or a combination of the foregoing, unless different architectural treatment and/or materials are specifically approved by the Planning Director with respect to the exposed portion of any such wall, at the time of Plan of Development review.
4. Top Story Step-Back – The building wall on the top story shall be stepped back at least five (5) feet from the primary building wall on each side of the building.

The Special Use Permit would be subject to the following conditions:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be for exceeding the inclined plane height for a mixed-use building, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- (c) Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the Special Use, a plan of development for the Special Use shall be approved by the Director of the Department of Planning and Development Review, or designee, pursuant to Article X, Division 4 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.

### **Surrounding Area**

The adjacent properties to the east are zoned UB-2 Urban Business District and are primarily commercial and adjacent properties to the west are zoned R-5 Residential and are primarily single-family residential.

### **Affordability**

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$109,400 per year.\* The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$32,820 per year, or \$2,735 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden. Rental estimates are not yet available for this project.

*\*(U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Regional)*

### **Neighborhood Participation**

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Edgehill Chamberlayne Court Civic Association. Staff has received letters from the Edgehill Chamberlayne Court Civic Association and Chamberlayne Industrial Center Association.

**Staff Contact:** Shaianna Trump, Associate Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-7319