



## CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2021-077:** To rezone the properties known as 600 Commerce Road, 602 Commerce Road, and 606 Commerce Road from the M-2 Heavy Industrial District to the TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal District. (6th District)

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** April 5, 2021

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#### **PETITIONER**

Lory Markham – Markham Planning

#### **LOCATION**

600, 602, and 606 Commerce Road

#### **PURPOSE**

To rezone the properties known as 600 Commerce Road, 602 Commerce Road, and 606 Commerce Road from the M-2 Heavy Industrial District to the TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal District.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The applicant has requested to rezone the aforementioned property to authorize a mix of uses, such as residential and commercial uses, including retail, offices, personal service businesses and restaurants, that follow the requirements of the TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal District.

Staff finds that the proposed rezoning is appropriate given the recommendations of the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan and would contribute to the continued revitalization of the area.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the rezoning request.

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#### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

##### **Site Description**

The properties, together, consist of approximately 16,135 SF, or .38 acres, of land. The properties are located in the Old Town Manchester Neighborhood on Commerce Road between Marx Street and Dinwiddie Avenue

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

The proposed zoning district (TOD-1) permits a variety of residential and commercial uses, including retail, offices, personal service businesses and restaurants.

### **Richmond 300 Master Plan**

The City's *Richmond 300* Plan designates a future land use category for the aforementioned property as Destination Mixed-Use which is defined as "Key gateways featuring prominent destinations, such as retail, sports venues, and large employers, as well as housing and open space. Located at the convergence of several modes of transportation, including Pulse BRT or other planned transit improvements."

Higher density, transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites. New development should be urban in form, may be of larger scale than existing context, and, where relevant, should pay special attention to the historic character of the existing context. Development should enhance the public realm and create a sense of place. Many buildings are vertically mixed-use. Developments continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. 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. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be of alleys whenever possible; new driveways are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages. Surface parking is prohibited as a principal use; when surface parking is provided as an accessory use, it should be located to the rear of buildings and screened. Parking requirements are reduced to allow more market-based parking strategies, including shared parking. Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories.

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

Secondary Uses: Institutional and government. (p. 64)

The portion of Commerce Road fronted by the property is designated as a "Great Street" and "Major Mixed-Use Street." Great streets are significant entrances to the city and serve as major connectors between city destinations.

Major Mixed-Use Streets are characterized by the following principles:

- 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 (p. 72)

## **Zoning and Ordinance Conditions**

The properties are located in the M-2 Heavy Industrial District. The City's Zoning Administration reviewed the application and provided the following comments:

### **ZONING AND USE:**

Current: The current zoning district (M-2) permits many commercial uses, including manufacturing, wholesaling and distribution establishments.

Proposed: The proposed zoning district (TOD-1) permits a variety of residential and commercial uses, including retail, offices, personal service businesses and restaurants.

### **YARDS:**

Current: The M-2 district has the following yard requirements for this location:

- (1) Front yard. None
- (2) Side yards. None
- (3) Rear yard. None

Proposed: The TOD-1 district has the following yard requirements for these properties:

#### (1) Front yard.

a. For dwelling units located on the ground floor:

- 1. A front yard of at least ten feet shall be required. In no case shall a front yard with a depth greater than fifteen feet be permitted, except for pedestrian plazas, outdoor dining areas and other features.

b. For all other uses:

- 1. No front yard is required. In no case shall a front yard with depth greater than ten feet be permitted, except for pedestrian plazas, outdoor dining areas and other features.

(2) Side yards. None

(3) Rear yard. None

### **HEIGHT:**

Current: In the M-2 district, no building or structure shall exceed 45 feet in height, provided that additional height shall be permitted, except for sign structures, when all portions of a building or structure over 45 feet in height are set back from side and rear lot lines a minimum of one foot for each two feet of height in excess of 45 feet and provided, further, that no portion of a building or structure shall penetrate an inclined plane originating at the centerline of an abutting street and extending over the lot at an inclination of one foot horizontal for each three feet vertical.

Proposed: In the TOD-1 zoning district, no building shall exceed twelve stories in height. Every main building hereinafter constructed shall have a minimum height of not less than two stories, except that porches, porticos and similar structures attached to a main building may be of lesser height.

**USABLE OPEN SPACE:** In the proposed TOD-1 zoning district, a usable open space ratio of not less than 0.10 shall be provided for newly constructed buildings or portions thereof devoted to dwelling uses.

**PARKING:** In the proposed TOD-1 zoning district, off-street parking spaces shall not be required for uses other than dwelling uses, hotels and motels. For multifamily dwelling units, no parking spaces are required for 1 to 16 dwelling units. One parking space is required per 2 dwelling units over 16 units.

**SIGNAGE:**

Current: The M-2 zoning district permits three square feet of signage for each linear foot of lot frontage along the street with a maximum of 300 square feet for each street frontage. Wall signs, projecting signs, suspended signs, awning signs, canopy signs, freestanding signs, roof signs and off-premises signs shall be permitted.

Proposed: Signage in the TOD-1 zoning district shall not exceed two square feet for each linear foot of lot frontage along the street nor in any case 200 square feet for each street frontage. Wall signs, projecting signs, suspended signs, awning signs, canopy signs, and freestanding signs shall be permitted. One freestanding sign not exceeding 20 square feet in area or 5 feet in height shall be permitted.

**Surrounding Area**

Currently, all adjacent properties are zoned the same M-2 Heavy Industrial District as the subject property. Properties within the B-3 General Business District are also located in the vicinity.

A mix of industrial, commercial, office, and residential land uses are present in the vicinity.

**Neighborhood Participation**

Staff notified the Blackwell Historic Community Civic Association and area residents and property owners of the proposed rezoning. Staff has not received any letters or notices of support or opposition to this application.

**Staff Contact:** Jonathan Brown, Senior Planner, PDR, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5734.