



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2024-013: To rezone the property known as 809 Oliver Hill Way from the M-1 Light Industrial District to the TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal District, upon certain proffered conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 6, 2024

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

809 Oliver Hill Way

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting to rezone Tax Parcel E000-0318/003, as shown in the 2024 records of the City Assessor, from the M-1 Light Industrial District to the TOD-1 Transit Oriented Nodal District to allow mixed-use development with residential uses.

The applicant seeks to provide variability in housing and/or neighborhood-serving uses to support existing housing (Attachment 2). The applicant is requesting a zone change to TOD-1 to allow for higher-density, transit-oriented development that is consistent with the City's Master Plan recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposal is consistent with the recommendations of the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan and the proposal contributes to Objective 1.1 to "rezone the city in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan." (Richmond 300, p. 109). The properties are designated as Destination Mixed-Use (DMU). The DMU recommendations envision higher density, transit-oriented development that is urban in form and may be of larger scale than the existing context. This designation recommends that development should enhance the public realm and create a sense of place through vertically mixed-use buildings that are typically a minimum height of five stories. DMU recommends ground floor uses that engage with and enliven the street through transparency and interaction between building and street. This designation supports retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space as primary uses. (Richmond 300, p. 64).

Rezoning to TOD-1 is aligned with the DMU designation by allowing a variety of uses, including residential and commercial, allowing higher density, and enhancing the character of development along principal corridors, at key gateways, and at nodes of high activity located near transit service, bicycle infrastructure, and pedestrian friendly streetscapes. Additionally, TOD-1 encourages an active pedestrian environment and mixed-use character by providing windows in



Figure 1: Surrounding Zoning Districts (subject properties outlined in red)

building facades along street frontages. The TOD-1 district provides ‘form-based’ standards that regulate the location and screening of parking areas, building façade fenestration, maximum setbacks, usable open space, and maximum and minimum height. In addition to these requirements, future development greater than 30,000 square feet of floor area requires a Plan of Development to ensure the compatibility with the surrounding uses. For these reasons, the TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal District classification is desired as an alternative to M-1 district and consistent with the DMU future land use recommendations.

Staff finds that the proposal contributes to Objective 6.1 to “Increase the number of residents and jobs at Nodes and along enhanced transit corridors in a land development pattern that prioritizes multi-modal transportation options.” (Richmond 300, p. 109). The site is located on a block fronted by two Major Mixed-Use Streets, Oliver Hill Way and N 18th Street, both of which provide bicycle lanes which support multi-modal alternate transportation options available to future users moving to and from the site. Rezoning to TOD-1 is supported at this location given it requires form elements and that the available bicycle lanes will carry volumes of pedestrians through commercial and mixed-use areas, which is consistent with the recommendations of Major Mixed-Use Streets. (Richmond 300, p. 72). Staff acknowledge that while the property is approximately 1,400 feet from nearest public transit bus stops to the east and south, as additional density gets created along Oliver Hill Way, GRTC routes may respond to meet demand accordingly and expand services closer to users generated by future development.

Staff finds that the proposal is consistent with the 2009 Downtown Plan which envisions a development scenario featuring Urban Center-character development, which is characterized by “higher density, mixed-use development, typically arranged on a fine-grained street network, with wide sidewalks, regular tree planting, and minimal setbacks.” (Downtown Plan, p. 3.25) The proposed TOD-1 zone is aligned with the Downtown Plan, as it allows for a mix of uses, minimal setbacks, and encourages walkable and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.

Staff find the proposal is generally in compliance with the Shockoe Small Area Plan Objective 2.3 to “incentivize the development of mixed-use, mixed-income residential growth to encourage private sector investment in vacant lots, surface parking lots, and vacant buildings, and partner with the private sector and non-profits toward improving affordable housing options and inventory, targeting 60% and below the Area Median Income (AMI).” (Shockoe Small Area Plan p. 61) The applicant, a nonprofit, proposes rezoning to TOD-1 to utilize the property for a mixed-use building containing affordable dwelling units and focusing on the needs of historically underserved communities.

Staff finds that with the ordinance conditions, the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting a change of zoning, are met. Staff finds that the proposed zoning change would not be detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved, would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved, and would not create hazards, overcrowding of land, or interfere with public requirements and adequate light and air.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Rezoning request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The property consists of one parcel totaling 1.955 acres. The property is situated in the Upper Shockoe Valley neighborhood and fronts O Street to the north, N 18th Street to the east, and Oliver Hill Way to the west. The project is immediately adjacent to the Leigh St Viaduct/O Street

to the north. The subject property is currently improved with a single-story office building and paved parking area.

Adjacent and nearby properties are a combination of M-1, M-2, B-5, TOD-1, B-5, and R-53. The surrounding area is a mix of industrial, multifamily, office and other commercial uses.

Master Plan

The City's recently adopted Richmond 300 Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Destination Mixed-Use. A Destination Mixed-Use designation describes, "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."

"Development Style: 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: 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 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.

Intensity: 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." (Richmond 300, p. 64).

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners. There are no civic associations within 150 feet of the property. Staff has not received written public comments.

Staff Contact:

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Attachments

1. Application Coversheet
2. Applicant's Report
3. Survey
4. Map