



## CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**ORD. 2019-174:** To rezone certain properties in the VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Plan area along North Lombardy Street between Brook Road and Chamberlayne Avenue; West Graham Road between North Lombardy Street and Chamberlayne Avenue; Overbrook Road between North Lombardy Street and Chamberlayne Avenue; and Chamberlayne Avenue from the 2300 block to the 2900 block.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Department of Planning and Development Review  
**Date:** July 15, 2019

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#### **PETITIONER**

City of Richmond  
900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

#### **LOCATION**

Lombardy Street, Chamberlayne Avenue, Graham Avenue and Overbrook Road in the Virginia Union neighborhood.

#### **PURPOSE**

To amend the official zoning map for the purpose of creating a neighborhood center at the heart of the VUU/Chamberlayne Plan area, the key recommendation of the Plan.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

In November 2015 the City Planning Commission adopted the VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Plan (adopted by City Council February 2016, herein referred to as "the Plan"). The Plan was created with significant input from neighborhood residents and area institutions. The key recommendation of the Plan was to create a walkable neighborhood center with shops, restaurants, and other amenities. The area is currently zoned B-3 (General Business) and B-2 (Community Business), which are incompatible with stated Plan goals. Rezoning to UB-2 (Urban Business) would allow development to take on a character compatible with Plan goals and a walkable neighborhood center.

**Staff recommends approval of the ordinance.**

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## FINDINGS OF FACT

### Background

This rezoning is consistent with the recommendations of the adopted VUU/Chamberlayne Plan. The Plan was formed with input from a steering committee made up of representatives from the Edgehill Civic Association, the Chamberlayne Court Civic Association, Virginia Union University, Pfizer, the Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU, the Richmond Association of Realtors, and multiple small business owners in the area.

The steering committee identified *Strengths*, *Weaknesses* and *Opportunities* of the study area. The primary *Weaknesses* were "lack of neighborhood and retail services," "too many storage and auto uses in critical locations," "corrosion of streetscapes and inconsistent sidewalks," "too many parking lots, not enough green space," and "old motels and nuisance uses." The primary *Opportunities* were: "create a neighborhood and college town center on Lombardy," "attract shops, restaurants, and community services," "build more housing" and "improve appearance and usefulness of streets."

Changing the zoning designation to UB-2, as recommended by the Plan, will guide new development to fit the character of the neighborhood center, eventually turning Lombardy Street into the walkable neighborhood retail center the Plan recommended.

### Master Plan

The VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Plan is an adopted amendment to the official Master Plan. Rezoning will fulfill the first phase of Plan implementation. The VUU/Chamberlayne Plan future land use map and recommendations will be incorporated into Richmond 300, the City Master Plan update currently underway.

### Existing and Proposed Zoning

Staff has completed a thorough analysis of the specifics of each zoning district and has concluded that the UB-2 Urban Business District, as recommended by The Plan, will achieve the land use goals of The Plan.

UB-2 differs from B-3 and B-2 in that it does not allow auto-service centers, auto sales, motor fuels dispensing and other uses typical of B-3 and B-2. UB-2 has no required front yard setback and new buildings must be a minimum of two stories and a maximum of three stories (four if an adjacent lot has four stories, which is not applicable to this area). Parking lots may not be located between a main building and the right-of-way, and must be screened. Driveways from streets are not allowed if alley access is available. All new development over 1,000 square feet requires a Plan of Development.

### **Public Engagement and Information Sharing**

PDR staff presented the rezoning concept to the Edgehill/Chamberlayne Court Civic Association March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Postcards with the dates of two public open houses about the rezoning were sent to each of the 108 property owners affected by the rezoning. The two open houses were held at the Fourth Police Precinct: Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5 to 7pm and Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup> from 11am to 1pm, with approximately 40 people in attendance altogether. PDR staff presented the topic of rezoning at the Third District meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup> and the Battery Park Civic Association meeting April 9<sup>th</sup>. A summary document (see attached) was created and widely circulated, including by RVA News. Richmond Bizsense wrote an article and quoted PDR staff about the rezoning on April 3.

Public response to the rezoning has been overwhelmingly positive, and multiple property and business owners have asked PDR staff to proceed with the other Plan recommended rezonings as soon as possible.

Staff will continue to keep in touch with the Edgehill/Chamberlayne Court Civic Association and other community stakeholders as the process moves forward and will notify all open house attendees of the dates of public hearings.

### **Attached Summary Document**

In order to convey the ideas and reasoning behind this rezoning process clearly and thoroughly, staff created a summary document complete with explanatory text, photos of the rezoning area, maps of existing and proposed zoning, exact zoning changes, and explanation of each recommendation. Please see attached summary for further details.

### **Staff Contact:**

Anne W. Darby, AICP, Planner III – Zoning Specialist  
Department of Planning and Development Review  
[Anne.Darby@richmondgov.com](mailto:Anne.Darby@richmondgov.com)  
646-5648