



## CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2022-145:** To rezone the property known as 600 Decatur Street from the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District to the B-4 Central Business District.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** June 6, 2022

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#### **PETITIONER**

Lory Markham, Markham Planning

#### **LOCATION**

600 Decatur Street

#### **PURPOSE**

The applicant is requesting to rezone the property to the B-4 Central Business District, which allows for dense, walkable transit oriented mixed use development with no height limit other than that the inclined plane requirement as it relates to street width, whereas the current B-7 Mixed-Use Business District limits building heights to five stories in general and six stories under certain circumstances.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed rezoning would include a single parcel of land located on the south side of Decatur Street between East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and East 7<sup>th</sup> Street, in the Old Town Manchester neighborhood. The total land area of the parcel is 42,672 square feet, or 0.977 acres. The property is improved with a single-story warehouse building.

Richmond 300 recommends a future land use of "Destination Mixed-Use" for the property. The primary uses envisioned for Destination Mixed-Use are retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space. Secondary uses are institutional and government. The development style envisioned is higher-density, transit-oriented on vacant or underutilized sites. New development should be urban in form, may be of larger scale than the existing context, and should pay special attention to the historic character of the existing context. Development should enhance the public realm and create a sense of place, with many vertically mixed-use buildings. A gridded street pattern should be continued or introduced to increase connectivity. Ground floor uses are envisioned to engage with and enliven the street through windows, doors, storefronts and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street. The recommended intensity is high with new buildings typically a minimum of five stories. Pedestrian, bicycle and transit access must be prioritized.

The property is also located within the vicinity of the "Downtown-Manchester" primary growth node, which envisions the area as continuing to be a population center, with people and economic activity supporting a thriving business corridor along Hull Street.

The property is currently located in the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District, which permits dwelling units and a variety of commercial uses. The height limit for new buildings is five stories in general

with six stories permitted under certain circumstances. Form-based requirements ensure that new developments are pedestrian-oriented.

Staff finds that the zoning change from the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District to the B-4 Central Business District is consistent with both the “Destination Mixed-Use” land use category, as well as the property’s location within the “Downtown-Manchester” priority growth node. The B-4 District would allow for more density and require form-related criteria that help support the vision of the “Downtown-Manchester” priority growth node.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Rezoning request.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The proposed rezoning would include a single parcel of land located on the south side of Decatur Street between East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and East 7<sup>th</sup> Street, in the Old Town Manchester neighborhood. The total land area of the parcel is 42,672 square feet, or 0.977 acres. The property is improved with a single-story warehouse building.

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

The proposed rezoning to B-4 Central Business District would allow for multi-family residential, and a variety of commercial uses that are not auto-oriented. The use will be determined prior to the property being developed in the future.

### **Master Plan**

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property as Destination Mixed-Use. This land use category is described as “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 on vacant or underutilized sites. New development should be urban in form, may be of larger scale than the existing context, and should pay special attention to the historic character of the existing context. Development should enhance the public realm and create a sense of place, with many vertically mixed-use buildings.

**Ground Floor:** Envisioned to engage with and enliven the street through windows, doors, storefronts and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street.

**Mobility:** Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveways are prohibited on Priority and Principal Street frontages. Vehicular

access to parcels should use alleys wherever possible. Parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.

Intensity: Buildings heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets.

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

Secondary Uses: Institutional and government.

The property is also located within the vicinity of the “Downtown-Manchester” primary growth node, which envisions the area as continuing to be a population center, with people and economic activity supporting a thriving business corridor along Hull Street.

### **Zoning and Ordinance Conditions**

The property is currently located in the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District, which permits dwelling units and a variety of commercial uses. The height limit for new buildings is five stories in general with six stories permitted under certain circumstances. Form-based requirements ensure that new developments are pedestrian-oriented.

The proposed B-4 Central Business District allows for similar uses, but the height limit for buildings is dictated by the widths of abutting streets. New buildings in the B-4 District have a minimum height of three stories. Form-based requirements ensure that new developments are pedestrian-oriented.

### **Surrounding Area**

Properties to the east are located in the B-6 Mixed-Use Business District. Properties to the south and east are also located in the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District. Properties to the north are located in both the B-7 Business Mixed-Use District and B-6 Mixed-Use Business District. Multi-family developments are located to the north, east, and south, and commercial warehouse use is located to the west.

### **Neighborhood Participation**

Staff notified area residents and property owners, as well as the Manchester Alliance. No letters of support or opposition have been received.

**Staff Contact:** Ray Roakes, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5467