

March 3, 2022

BY ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Mr. Matthew Ebinger
City of Richmond DPDR
Land Use Administration Division, Room 511
City Hall, 900 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Mark J. Kronenthal
Richmond Office
(804) 441-8603 (direct)
mkronenthal@rothjackson.com

**Re: Conditional Rezoning: 501 Orleans Street (E0001441001) and
4811 South 37th Street (E0001441030)**

Dear Mr. Ebinger:

This letter shall serve as the Applicant's Report accompanying the application for conditional rezoning (the "Rezoning") for the property known as 501 Orleans Street (the "Orleans Property") and 4811 South 37th Street (the "37th Property") (the Orleans Property and the 37th Property, collectively, (the "Property"). The Rezoning would permit the use of the Property for market rate multifamily use, ground floor commercial (office) use, and accessory parking, all as shown on the enclosed conceptual plan (the "Plan"), by changing the zoning designation from M-1 to B-5 zoning.

The applicant, 501 Orleans LLC, a Virginia limited liability company (the "Applicant"), is a related entity to Harlan Construction, a regionally-recognized local commercial general contractor ("Harlan"). Harlan's headquarters office is currently located outside the City of Richmond and Harlan would relocate their headquarters office operations to the Property upon approval of the Rezoning and completion of the proposed project. The Applicant owns the 37th Property and is the contract purchaser of the Orleans Property.

The request in this Rezoning is narrowly limited to the change of applicable zoning from M-1 to B-5, consistent with the existing B-5 zoning recently approved by the City for the comprehensive Fulton Yards project to the south and east of the Property. The Applicant proposes that the new building on the Property have four fully finished facades, each with equal architectural dignity, due to its gateway location at the entrance of the City from eastern Henrico County along Williamsburg Road.

While the building will have equal architectural dignity facing each of Williamsburg Road, Orleans Street, 37th Street, and the Henrico County boundary, the building has been sited to repeat the urban form of the street wall along Orleans Street created by the approved conditional rezoning on the adjacent property between 37th Street to the CSX overpass. The Applicant would further repeat the sidewalk width and street tree placement from that case.

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You will see on the Plan that the Henrico County boundary and parcel lines along the Williamsburg Road frontage prevent the creation of an urban street wall form facing that road. The Applicant would propose that the portion of the Orleans Property that extends eastward would be enhanced through enhanced landscaping.

By way of background, the Property has been vacant for many years. The Richmond 300 (the “Master Plan”) generally recommends “Industrial Mixed Use” for the subject and surrounding properties and there is additional specific text guidance contained elsewhere in the Master Plan that is supportive of the request. Industrial Mixed use is described as “[f]ormerly traditional industrial areas that are transitioning to mixed-use because of their proximity to growing neighborhoods and changes in market conditions,” and supports ground floor commercial or “maker” space blended with residential use on upper stories. The proposed office headquarters and multifamily residential uses enhance walkability by adding an attractive, well lit, and active community destination, as well as eyes on the street and new users for the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure supporting the area. The headquarters office will be open throughout the day on weekdays, creating a steady level of activity and vitality supportive of surrounding uses.

We would also note the following as you review the Application:

- The Rezoning will not impact the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the surrounding community. The Rezoning is consistent with the recommendations of the Master Plan related to the Property. It would contribute to the general welfare of the community by, among other things, providing an opportunity to build office and residential uses on a long-vacant parcel and adding users to existing bicycle, pedestrian, and park infrastructure.
- The Rezoning will not result in significant traffic impacts in the area involved, again, owing to its consistency with the Master Plan and its design principals. The site allows for ample surface parking lot for the Applicant’s use. This parking area would also be useful as a placeholder for compatible future infill as the area’s non-vehicular transportation infrastructure and economy accommodate future compatible uses.
- The Rezoning will not over crowd the land or create an undue concentration population. The development is consistent with the pattern of development in the surrounding area and is consistent with the Master Plan.

In summary, the Applicant enthusiastically seeks approval of the Rezoning. The Rezoning would introduce now-missing vitality to the Property for the benefit of the community at large. The project would contribute to the vibrancy of the block through the provision of an appropriate urban form that is consistent with the desired development pattern of the surrounding neighborhood. Simultaneously with this application, the Applicant is working to meet with community organizations noted by staff and the District council member.

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Thank you for your time and consideration of this request, please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Kronenthal

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Dr. Cynthia Newbille

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