



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2023-209: To conditionally rezone the properties known as 4818, 4824, 4830, 4838, and 4850 Walmsley Boulevard from the RO-1 Residential Office District to the B-6 Mixed-Use Business District, the property known as 4870 Walmsley Boulevard from the B-2 Community Business District to the B-6 Mixed-Use Business District, and the property known as 4890 Walmsley Boulevard from the R-4 Single-Family Residential District to the B-6 Mixed-Use Business District.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 17, 2023

PETITIONER

Preston Lloyd for Crescent Preservation & Development Co and Spy Rock Real Estate Group

LOCATION

4818, 4824, 4830, 4838, 4850, 4870, and 4890 Walmsley Boulevard

PURPOSE

To conditionally rezone the properties known as 4818, 4824, 4830, 4838, and 4850 Walmsley Boulevard from the RO-1 Residential Office District to the B-6 Mixed-Use Business District, the property known as 4870 Walmsley Boulevard from the B-2 Community Business District to the B-6 Mixed-Use Business District, and the property known as 4890 Walmsley Boulevard from the R-4 Single-Family Residential District to the B-6 Mixed-Use Business District.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The proposal to rezone the subject properties to the B-6 Mixed Use Business District will allow the development of affordable multi-family housing consisting of 276 units housed in nine buildings that is compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods. The B-6 District specifically encourages appropriate infill development on vacant land. For this reason, the B-6 Mixed Use Business District classification is desired as an alternative to RO-1, R-4, and B-2 designations.

Staff finds that the proposed development would be consistent with the recommendations of the Richmond 300 master plan. The recommended land use recommendation is Community Mixed-Use for the property and an objective of the Master Plan is the provision of affordable housing.

Staff also finds that the proposed use is consistent with Objectives 14.4 and 14.5 of the City's Master Plan to which respectively seek to, "Increase the number of mixed-income communities along enhanced transit corridors" and "encourage more housing types throughout the city and greater density along enhanced transit corridors and at Nodes" (Richmond 300, p. 152). The proposed development is located near the intersection of Walmsley Boulevard and Broad Rock Boulevard, which is identified as a neighborhood node. Additionally, Broad Rock Boulevard is identified as a Future Enhanced Transit Corridor in the Richmond 300 Master Plan.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the change of zoning request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The Property consists of seven vacant lots totaling 10.54 acres. Five of the seven parcels have frontage along Walmsley Boulevard. The two remaining lots will be accessible via adjacent properties included in the proposed rezoning.

Proposed Use of the Property

The following proffer statement has been voluntarily provided by the applicant:

1. Development Plan. The property shall be developed in general conformance with the attached Exhibit A, entitled "Rezoning Plan for Walmsley Boulevard Site" dated January 5, 2023 prepared by VHB (the "Concept Plan"). In connection with review and approval of the Plan of Development, the Director of Planning and Development Review shall be authorized to approve changes in the location and extent of features of the proposed development of the Property, provided that such changes are in general conformance with the Concept Plan.
2. Prohibited Uses. No portion of the property will be used for the following purposes:
 - a) Entertainment, cultural and recreational uses, including theaters, art galleries, museums, bowling alleys, amusement centers, and other commercial recreation facilities located within completely enclosed buildings.
 - b) Grocery Store.
 - c) Hotels.
 - d) Boarding kennel.
 - e) Professional, business and vocational schools when located above the ground floor of buildings, provided that no heavy machinery, welding equipment or internal combustion engine shall be used in conjunction therewith.
 - f) Radio and television broadcasting studios and offices, including accessory antennas, provided that the supporting hardware for any such antenna does not exceed 15 feet above ground level, or in the case of a building-mounted antenna, 15 feet above the surface of the building on which it is mounted, and that a plan of development as set forth in Article X of this chapter shall be required for any ground-mounted antenna.
 - g) Nightclubs.
 - h) Retail sales of liquor.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property for Community Mixed-Uses.

Development Style: The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary significantly depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Uses may be mixed horizontally in several buildings on a block or vertically within the same building. 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.

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 streets. Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening; shared parking requirements are encouraged. Community Mixed-Use Diagram.

The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. The common theme among all Community Mixed-Use areas is that a mix of uses are allowed and buildings must address the street.

Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to six stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas, as necessary. New buildings that are taller than historical buildings should step back from the build-to line after matching the height of the predominant cornice line of the block.

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

Secondary Uses: Single-family houses, institutional, and government.

The properties located across Roane Street to the west are Plan designated for Industrial Mixed-Use. These areas are formerly traditional industrial areas that are transitioning to mixed-use because of their proximity to growing neighborhoods and changes in market conditions. These areas may still retain some light industrial use.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The applicant request to rezone the subject properties to the B-6 Mixed Use Business District. The intent of the B-6 district is to encourage development of mixed land uses consistent with the objectives of the master plan and the downtown plan, and to promote enhancement of the character of development along principal corridors and in other areas. The district regulations are intended to encourage appropriate infill development on undeveloped land, promote adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings or enable redevelopment of properties where continuation of current uses or adaptive reuse is not feasible, depending on the character and needs of particular areas. The district regulations are also intended to safeguard the character of adjoining properties, to maintain existing streetscape character by providing continuity of building setbacks and heights, to enhance public safety and encourage an active pedestrian environment appropriate to the mixed use character of the district by providing for windows in building façades along street frontages, and to promote an environment that is conducive to preservation of important historic, architectural and cultural features that may exist within the district. Finally, the district regulations

are intended to ensure adequate accessible parking and safe vehicular and pedestrian circulation, to facilitate a streetscape with minimum setbacks along principal street frontages and to provide for limited interruption by driveways and vehicular traffic across public sidewalk areas along principal street frontages.

Any future redevelopment shall require approval of a Plan of Development.

The rezoning is requested with proffers (detailed above).

Surrounding Area

The properties are located in near the intersection of Walmsley Boulevard and Broad Road Boulevard. The surrounding properties are predominately occupied by commercial and institutional uses.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners. No comments of opposition or support have been received.

Staff Contact: David Watson, Senior Planner, PDR, Land Use Administration, 804-646-1036