



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

CPCR 2018-108: TO DECLARE AN INTENT TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING ORDINANCE FOR THE PURPOSE OF AMENDING THE COLISEUM MALL (CM) DISTRICT AND THE SIGNAGE AND PARKING REGULATIONS FOR THAT DISTRICT.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Department of Planning and Development Review
Date: December 17, 2018

PETITIONER

City of Richmond
900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

LOCATION

The relevant project area is in downtown Richmond, bounded by E. Leigh Street to the north, E. Marshall Street to the south, N. Tenth Street to the east, and N. Fifth Street to the west.

PURPOSE

To declare an intent to amend the official zoning ordinance text for the purpose of amending the Coliseum Mall (CM) district, along with the signage and parking requirements for that district, for the purpose of accommodating a proposed mixed-use redevelopment project surrounding a new entertainment arena.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

On November 9, 2017, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to redevelop an area of downtown generally bounded by E. Leigh Street to the north, E. Marshall Street to the south, N. Tenth Street to the east, and N. Fifth Street to the west. In response to the RFP, the City received a Proposal from the NH District Corporation (NHDC) for a mixed-use project. Following months of due diligence and negotiations, in November 2018, the City Administration announced it had reached agreement in principle on major items with NHDC. Negotiations are ongoing as details are finalized; however, upon the successful completion thereof, the Administration intends to submit appropriate ordinances to City Council.

Consistent with the provisions set forth by City Council in Chapter 2, Division 3, of the Richmond City Code, the Administration intends to submit all necessary project-related ordinances to City Council at the same time. One of the contemplated necessary ordinances is a text amendment to the City's CM (Coliseum Mall) zoning district. Per

state law, before a zoning text amendment ordinance can be introduced, a procedural step must occur to “initiate” the zoning amendment (one way to do so is a resolution from the Planning Commission). As such, this Resolution solely satisfies the statutory prerequisite and allows Planning and Development Review staff to start the process of finalizing language for an ordinance containing a text amendment to the CM zoning district so that such an ordinance can be introduced at a later date along with all other ordinances related to the proposed project. Once introduced, the actual text amendment ordinance will be subject to the review of the Planning Commission and City Council.

The proposed development includes some uses, like a bus transfer terminal and residential units, which are not currently permitted in the CM district, while other uses currently permitted in the CM district would not be appropriate in the new development. The proposed development also contemplates signage not currently permitted and which would be unique to the CM district as it would be of greater variety and size than allowed elsewhere in the City.

Planning and Development Review staff has discussed the uses and signage with the development team in great detail as it works toward finalizing proposed CM district language changes. In addition to the use, signage, and parking regulations, Planning and Development Review staff intends to include the six design principles of development from the Pulse Corridor Plan in the district’s intent statement to ensure that future development provides a walkable, human-scale environment. Furthermore, in order to be consistent with the vision of an accessible, equitable neighborhood outlined in the Request for Proposals, staff continues to work with the development team to plan for areas of publicly-accessible open space within the project area.

Staff supports the resolution.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Background

For decades, the blocks in the proposed redevelopment area have been underutilized or vacant. The City or related entities own the majority of the land in the area, and it has been repeatedly identified as a significant opportunity for redevelopment in the center of the Richmond region. The zoning language changes, when proposed, will help shape the area into the vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood that is envisioned.

Master Plan

The City's Request for Proposals for the area envisions a development that is generally consistent with both the Downtown Master Plan (2009) and the Pulse Corridor Plan (2017).

The Downtown Master Plan states a "need for higher level retail centers and businesses in the area to facilitate activities when the Convention Center is not in use" (p 1.12). That plan also calls for new downtown development to be "respectful of the urban context", encouraging zoning to allow for a mix of uses and increase the residential population in the vicinity of local businesses and civic uses [to] help stimulate social and economic activity downtown" (p 3.4).

The Pulse Corridor Plan indicates that the area should be "Downtown Mixed-Use", as well as identifying it as an "Opportunity Area" in the Future Land Use map (Fig 3.5). The Plan specifically recommends that the Coliseum and adjacent City-owned parcels are an opportunity site that could be redeveloped into a mixed-use, mixed-income, pedestrian-friendly environment that serves as a connection...between the Convention Center, Biotech Park, and the Capital District" (p 93).

Zoning

Staff is studying and preparing language changes to the Coliseum Mall (CM) district and relevant signage and parking regulations to accommodate the vision of the City's Request for Proposals and the Pulse Corridor Plan.

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