



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2020-101: To close, to public use and travel, certain alleys in the block bounded by East Jackson Street, North 8th Street, East Leigh Street, and North 7th Street consisting of 8,665+/- square feet, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 4, 2020

PETITIONER

Bobby Vincent Jr., Director, Department of Public Works

LOCATION

Alleys in the block bounded by East Jackson Street, North 8th Street, East Leigh Street and North 7th Street

PURPOSE

To close to public use and travel certain alleys in the block bounded by East Leigh Street, East Jackson Street, North 8th Street, and North 7th Street consisting of 8,665 sq. ft. as shown on DPW Dwg. No. N-28912 dated 2/21/2020 and entitled "PROPOSED CLOSING TO PUBLIC USE AND TRAVEL OF ALLEYS IN THE BLOCK BOUNDED BY E JACKSON STREET, N 8TH STREET, E LEIGH STREET AND N 7TH STREET" at the request of the Draper Aden Associates on behalf of their client/applicant Activation Capital.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Activation Capital plans to construct a six-story multi-purpose research/office building and parking deck as part of the Virginia Bio+Tech Park at 708 E. Leigh Street. This new building at 708 E. Leigh Street is being designed to house budding startups, contain more laboratories, offices and meeting spaces and to house more established biotech companies. The current use of this property is a vacant lot with abandoned buildings. This development will further add to the existing Bio+Tech Park that comprises a 34-acre campus in downtown Richmond that is home to 70 businesses, nonprofits; government laboratories and research institutes.

The vacation of these alleys is necessary to facilitate this building construction. Activation Capital owns all of the parcels of land being consolidated with this plat. The vacation of these alleys does not impact any of the adjacent land owners.

The value of the right of way to be vacated (8,665 sf) has been determined to be \$54,502.85 (\$6.29 per square foot) and is based on assessed values of adjacent parcels

The Department of Public Works offers no objections to the proposed right-of-way closing and request that any approvals be subject to, and including without limitation, the terms and conditions listed below.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Public right-of-way

PROPOSED USE FOR THE PROPERTY

Multi-story office building with structured parking

MASTER PLAN

The City's Pulse Corridor Plan recommends a future land use category for the aforementioned properties as Downtown Mixed-Use. The category features high-density development with office buildings, apartments, and a mix of complementary uses, including regional destinations. Higher-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites; new development should be urban in form and may be of larger scale than existing context. Active commercial ground floor uses required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Active ground floor uses and design required on priority street frontages. Driveway entrances required to be off alleys whenever possible; new driveways prohibited on street-oriented commercial and priority street frontages. Little to no setback of new development unless to create pedestrian-oriented amenities like plazas and outdoor dining. Surface parking prohibited as a principal use; when surface parking is provided as an accessory use, it should be located to the rear of buildings and screened by shade trees. Parking requirements are substantially less in these areas than other areas of the city and are largely eliminated.

ZONING

The current zoning for the public right-of-way is RP-Research Park.

ORDINANCE CONDITIONS

The Department of Public Works offers no objections to the proposed right-of-way closing and request that any approvals be subject to, and including without limitation, the following terms and conditions:

1. The applicant(s)/owner(s)/successor(s) shall be responsible for any and all costs associated with the proposed closing, including without limitation, realignment, relocation, or removal of utilities, or infrastructures, installment of new utilities or infrastructures, new or revised street name or directional signs, streetlights, etc., as required or directed by City Agencies.
2. The applicant(s)/owner(s)/successor(s) shall provide evidence that they have identified any public or private utilities that may have a vested interest in or facilities located within the subject right of way and worked out arrangements with the owners of any such utilities to protect the owner's rights. All affected owners of private and public infrastructure must provide written acknowledgement that they are satisfied with the resolution of their facilities within the proposed closing area for this Ordinance to be valid.
3. The applicant(s)/owner(s)/successor(s) shall be responsible for surface storm water overflow in the area to be closed.

4. The applicant(s)/owner(s)/successor(s) shall be responsible for obtaining the written consent of all abutting landowners to the closing and other property owners within the block affected by the closing.

5. A twelve-month expiration clause shall be included whereby all conditions must be satisfied by the applicant(s)/owner(s)/successor(s) within twelve months of the ordinance adoption date and approved by the City before the ordinance can go into effect.

6. The applicant(s)/owner(s)/successor(s) agrees to pay the City of Richmond for this public right-of-way, the sum of \$ 54,502.85.

7. The applicant has submitted a Plan of Development (POD-059505-2019) for the development of these parcels. As a condition of POD approval, this right of way closure and vacation must be approved by City Council.

8. The applicant/developer of the property must remove and preserve the existing cobblestones from the vacated alleys. The return of these cobblestones to the City must be arranged prior to construction.

9. The applicant(s)/owner(s)/successor(s) is responsible for providing the Law Department with written evidence within twelve (12) months of the ordinance adoption that all conditions of the ordinance have been satisfied. Should this written evidence not be submitted to the said offices prior to the expiration date after final approval of the ordinance, the ordinance will become null and void automatically.

SURROUNDING AREA

Large campus office buildings are the primary uses in the immediate area, as well as the vacant Coliseum site.

Staff Contact

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