



## CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2020-194** - To amend Ord. No. 2020-050, adopted May 11, 2020, which adopted the Special Fund Budgets for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 and appropriated the estimated receipts of the Special Revenue funds, to transfer funds in the amount of \$1,700,000.00 from the Office of the City Attorney's "Delinquent Tax Sales" special fund and to amend Ord. No. 2020-051, adopted May 11, 2020, which accepted a program of proposed Capital Improvement Projects for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 and the four fiscal years thereafter, adopted a Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Capital Budget, and determined a means for financing the same by (i) establishing a new project in the Culture & Recreation category called the "Enslaved African Heritage Campus" project and (ii) appropriating the funds transferred to the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Capital Budget by increasing revenues and the amount appropriated to the new Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities' Enslaved African Heritage Campus project by \$1,700,000.00 for the purpose of planning, designing, acquiring land for, and constructing a multiuse enslaved African cultural and heritage parklike campus in the city of Richmond.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** September 21, 2020

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#### **PETITIONER**

Kimberly M. Chen, Senior Manager, City of Richmond Economic Development and Planning

#### **LOCATION**

The proposed campus is generally located on property between East Main Street, North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and I-95 west of East Broad Street, and on property between railroad tracks and I-95 east of East Broad Street.

#### **PURPOSE**

To create a new CIP project for the Enslaved African Heritage Campus and transferring funds representing a portion of the total funds necessary for the completion of the project in order to fund initial project tasks.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

This project reflects significant advocacy over many decades by numerous individuals and organizations to properly honor and memorialize the trade in enslaved Africans that was centered in Shockoe. Numerous proposals have been made for how best to achieve this goal including a memorial park and a National Slavery Museum.

In 2018, the Rose Fellowship began to bring these various proposals into focus. The Rose Fellowship suggested the creation of an inclusive community engagement strategy which led to the Mayor's creation of the Shockoe Alliance to guide the community conversation to develop a Shared Vision for Shockoe that would be incorporated into an area plan.

In 2019, the VCU Center for Urban Regional Analysis at Virginia Commonwealth University prepared a study, Shockoe Bottom Memorialization: Community and Economic Impacts, for Preservation Virginia, Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. CURA stated in the report that the Shockoe Bottom Memorial Campus “has the potential to become a site of reflection, contemplation, perseverance, innovation, and heritage tourism.” (For reference, see the CURA Impact Study attached.)

The notion of a “Campus” in Shockoe came from the Center for Design Engagement that envisioned a project that combined a memorial park and museum with other development opportunities that create equity in the area.

Most recently, a conceptual plan for the project was completed thanks to significant efforts undertaken by the Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project, Preservation Virginia, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

City Administration recommends approval of this request.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The proposed campus is generally located on property between East Main Street, North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and I-95 west of East Broad Street, and on property between railroad tracks and I-95 east of East Broad Street. The property is located within the Shockoe Bottom area of the City and the Main Street Station Area of the Pulse Corridor Plan.

### **PROPOSED USE FOR THE PROPERTY**

The proposed budget amendment would provide a portion of the total funds necessary for the completion of the Enslaved African Heritage Campus in order to fund initial project tasks.

### **MASTER PLAN**

The Pulse Corridor Plan recommends a combination of Public & Open Space, Nodal Mixed Use, Corridor Mixed Use, and Neighborhood Mixed Use land uses for the general campus area. The general campus area falls within the Main Street Station Area of the Pulse Corridor Plan.

According to the Pulse Corridor Plan, the main street station area vision is: Main Street Station continues to serve as the multi-modal transportation hub of Richmond by augmenting its offerings to include bikeshare, BRT service, and high-speed rail service. Uses around Main Street Station support the bustle of a train station with amenities that serve commuters, visitors, and a growing residential and employment base. The Shockoe Bottom neighborhood better connects to amenities such as the Virginia Capital Trail and the Canal Walk, and new development supports further public space amenities like the 17th Street Farmer’s Market Plaza and the Low Line. Ongoing efforts to commemorate, memorialize, and interpret the historic and cultural significance of Shockoe Bottom are supported as a key part of the neighborhood identity and are a priority for City investment.

**ZONING**

The general campus area falls within the M-1 Light Industrial, B-4 Central Business and B-5 Central Business Zoning Districts.

**SURROUNDING AREA**

A mix of M-1 Light Industrial, B-4 Central Business, B-5 Central Business, and TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal Zoning Districts are present in the vicinity of the general campus area. A mix of office, commercial, industrial, mixed-use, and multi-family residential land uses are present in the vicinity of the general campus area.

**Staff Contact:**

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