



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2020-217: To close to public travel certain medians located in Monument Avenue and North Allen Avenue at or near General Robert E. Lee Circle, to retain the City's legal interests in such medians, and to designate such medians as official City Parks, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: November 16, 2020

PETITIONERS

Honorable Kimberly B. Gray, 2nd District Representative (Patron)
Honorable Levar M. Stoney, Mayor (Co-Patron)

LOCATION

Certain medians located in Monument Avenue and North Allen Avenue near their intersection at General Robert E. Lee Circle

PURPOSE

To close to public travel certain medians located in Monument Avenue and North Allen Avenue at or near General Robert E. Lee Circle, to retain the City's legal interests in such medians, and to designate such medians as official City Parks, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The Hon. Kimberly B. Gray, 2nd District Representative, requested this ordinance in order to: 1. Transfer the five medians marked as parcels A, B, C, D, and E on the attached parcel illustration; two on Monument Avenue, and three on Allen Avenue, from the Department of Public Works to the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities and 2. Convert such parcels to city parks. The medians to be converted are marked as parcels A, B, C, D, and E on the attached parcel illustration.

The requested ordinance shall become effective once the adjacent property owners along each individual median have provided a quitclaim deed for such property owner's fee simple interest in the median to the City. In the event that the property owners adjacent to any individual median fail to grant the required quitclaim deeds to the City, the transfer of other medians that meet the requirement, and their conversion to city parks, shall proceed.

The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities shall work with the Department of Public Works to make such signage changes as are appropriate to reflect the new park names as soon as practical. Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities shall charge such fees as are usually charged for usage of the parks for special events.

The Department of Public Works shall retain as Right-of-Way all crosswalks and traffic control areas, and one foot behind the crosswalk to the curb.

The requested ordinance shall be conditioned on the City making arrangements with private utilities, whose properties or facilities are in the medians to be closed, for the removal, relocation, abandonment, or other disposition of those properties or facilities.

Upon transfer of the each parcel to the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities, each shall be converted to a city park with the names specified below.

City staff does not anticipate significant changes being made to the property immediately after adoption of the ordinance. Planning and Development Review staff and Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities staff are in agreement that a comprehensive planning process, involving significant public input, is needed regarding future changes and improvements to the larger Monument Avenue corridor, not just the property subject to this ordinance.

The Master Plan land use recommendations for the area include park/open space land use as appropriate use for the subject property. However, the Master Plan’s recommendations do not distinguish between the designation of the subject property as city right-of-way versus city park property.

On October 19, 2020 the Planning Commission voted to continue Ord. No. 2020-217 to the December 21, 2020 meeting of the Planning Commission. On November 2, 2020 the Planning Commission voted to reconsider Ordinance No. 2020-217 at the November 16, 2020 meeting of the Planning Commission.

City Administration recommends approval of this ordinance.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The site consists of the medians located in Monument Avenue and North Allen Avenue at or near General Robert E. Lee Circle, as shown on the attached parcel illustration.

Parcels D and E are currently known as Grace Park, and are improved with landscaping, hardscape, and benches.

Based upon the GIS baseline maps, the Department of Public Works has calculated the approximate square footages of the medians:

Median Map	Square Footage	Description
A	27,000	Westernmost of the two Monument Avenue medians
B	13,500	Southernmost of the three Allen Avenue medians
C	28,000	Easternmost of the two Monument Avenue medians
D	10,100	Median in the middle of the three Allen Avenue medians
E	<u>12,500</u>	Northernmost of the three Allen Avenue medians
Estimated Total	91,100	

Proposed Use of the Property

The medians would be converted into City parks and named as follows:

Parcel	Park Name
A	Monument Park West
B	Allen Avenue Common
C	Monument Park East
D	Grace Park South
E	Grace Park North

Master Plan & Zoning

The City of Richmond’s Master Plan designates a majority of the site for Single-Family (Medium Density) land use. Primary uses in this category are single-family detached dwellings at densities between 8 and 20 units per acre. Includes residential support uses such as schools, places of worship, neighborhood parks and recreation facilities, and limited public and semi-public uses.

A portion of Parcel E is designated for Corridor Mixed-Use land use. Primary uses for this designation are office, retail, personal service, cultural, and multi-family residential uses. Secondary uses are institutional and governmental uses, plazas, squares, pocket parks, and open space.

The final version of the Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a majority of the site for Public Open Space land use, which is described as public and quasi-public parks, recreation areas, open spaces, and cemeteries. Includes passive and active recreation, natural habitats, cemeteries, and large plazas. Access: Designed in a manner to allow access by all modes of transportation, while emphasizing connections to bicycle and pedestrian amenities, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared-use paths. Bike parking and other such amenities are provided as well. Primary Uses: Open space. Secondary Uses: Cultural, institutional, and governmental.

Parcel B is designated for Neighborhood Mixed-Use land use, which is described as existing or new highly-walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses. Development Style: These areas feature a variety of building types that are close to one another and create a unified street wall. The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas vary depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Setbacks, plazas, and parks create a sense of place and community gathering areas. Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), and open space. Secondary Uses: Large multifamily buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

Objective 2.1 of Richmond 300 is to align new facilities and improve existing city-owned facilities with the Future Land Use Plan. Strategy 2.1(e) is to develop a parks and community facilities master plan based within the context of the Future Land Use Plan that seeks to ensure all Richmonders live within a 10-minute walk of a park.

Parcels A, B, C, and a portion of D are zoned R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential; A portion of Parcels D and E are zoned R-48 Multi-Family Residential; A portion of Parcel E is zoned UB Urban Business. Parks operated by a government agencies are permitted uses in all of these zoning districts.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding area is comprised of a mix of single-family, two-family, and multi-family residential, institutional, office, and commercial uses.

Community Participation

Discussions with the community have taken place regarding this ordinance, including discussions with the Fan District Association, Monument Ave Preservation Society (MAPS), and Historic West Grace Street Association. Emails of support have been received from the Fan District Association, MAPS, and Historic West Grace Street Association. An email of opposition was received from a resident.

Staff Contact:

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