



February 2, 2021

Mr. Kevin Vonck, Acting Director  
Department of Planning & Development Review  
900 East Broad Street, Suite 511  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[kevin.vonck@richmondgov.com](mailto:kevin.vonck@richmondgov.com)

RE: Applicant's Report for Rezoning of 4401 E Main St (Rocketts Landing Block 6)

Dear Mr. Vonck

Please accept this letter as the Applicant's Report for the request to rezone the following 1.86 acres property from the RF-2 Riverfront district to the TOD-1 Transit Oriented district:

Address	Tax Parcel ID	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Ownership
4401 E Main St	E0000990019	1.86	RF-2	CENTRAL VIRGINIA INVESTMENTS ROCKETTS LANDING LLC

With this application, the property owner is petitioning the City Council for a rezoning from the RF-2 zoning regulations in order to facilitate future development that would be permitted by the regulations of the TOD-1 district. This requested rezoning is consistent with and in support of the development goals for the Rocketts Landing Neighborhood Node as detailed in the Richmond 300 Master Plan.

#### *Property*

The proposed rezoning will affect one parcel at the southeast corner of the intersection of E Main St and Nicholson St in an area identified by the Richmond 300 Master Plan as the Rocketts Landing Neighborhood Node. The property totals 1.86 acres and is adjacent to a similarly sized parcel to the south that is also being currently developed by the property owner. Other surrounding properties are a mix between vacant and industrial uses, and properties along the riverfront in the City and Henrico

County which have seen transformative development as part of Rocketts Landing – a project that has also been developed by the property owner.

### *Zoning Regulations & Background*

The property is located in the RF-2 Riverfront zoning district which is intended to provide for medium scale, planned mixed-use developments on relatively large sites in close proximity to the riverfront in a manner that will protect prominent views of the James River from public spaces. This property was rezoned from the M-2 Heavy Industrial zoning district to RF-2 in 2007. At that time, the RF-2 district offered the most appropriate by-right development conditions for this property. Although not directly adjacent to the James River, the RF-2 regulations for the site require open spaces of at least 50 feet between buildings, side and rear yards of 25 feet, breaks in the portions of the building over four stories, and an inclined plane height restriction as measured from the side and rear property lines.

This application requests a rezoning to the TOD-1 zoning district to permit future development of the property the flexibility to create a high-quality urban environment consistent with the City's vision for growth along the new Pulse Bus Rapid Transit corridor as implemented by the City and GRTC in recent years. The 2017 Pulse Corridor Plan sets guidance for development along this corridor and seeks to promote pedestrian-oriented residential and commercial uses. As part of this plan's implementation, the TOD-1 district was created in order to regulate appropriate development conditions along the corridor including on E Main St.

The adopted TOD-1 regulations permit a maximum height of 12 stories, which is one story less than the maximum height permitted in RF-2. However, TOD-1 regulations do not require the additional restrictions such as the space between buildings, breaks in building portions over four stories, or the side and rear yard setbacks. For the subject property, the lack of these restrictions will allow a future development to include active uses fronting each side of existing streets and also along potential new streets to recreate the grid system. These active uses would be at the street frontage with minimal setback to allow for a parking structure to the rear. This type of a pedestrian-oriented environment is fully supported by the recommendations of both the Pulse Corridor Plan and the Richmond 300 Master Plan.

### *Richmond 300 Master Plan*

This property is designated by Richmond 300 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. The Plan recommends developments of three to eight stories in height with ground floor uses that engage and enliven the street with parking located to the rear of street-facing buildings. Richmond 300 also designates the property as part of the Rocketts Landing Neighborhood Node. Nodes are places in Richmond where people and jobs are today and continue to grow into the future. Nodes are the places of convergence of many uses and include offices, shopping, housing, and/or public gathering places as well as access to multiple modes of transportation. Specifically for the property, the Plan recommends recreating the street grid in the industrial area near Nicholson Street.

In order to achieve these goals, new development in the area, especially on this underutilized property, must be encouraged provide sufficient density and mix of high quality commercial and residential uses fronting the streets. Accordingly, this requested rezoning of the property to TOD-1 regulations is consistent with the growth of the area as envisioned by the Richmond 300 Master Plan.

*City Charter Conditions*

Given the recommendations in the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan, we trust that you will agree with us that the potential development of the site under TOD-1 regulations would support the efforts to develop the Rocketts Landing Neighborhood Node in a manner consistent with the Plan; and that the rezoning meets the City Charter considerations to be observed in the alteration of zoning regulations.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. Please feel free to contact me at [lory@markhamplanning.com](mailto:lory@markhamplanning.com) or (804) 248-2561 if you have any questions or require additional materials to process the application.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lory Markham', written in a cursive style.

Lory Markham

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Cynthia I. Newbille, 7<sup>th</sup> District Council Representative  
Matthew Ebinger, Secretary to the City Planning Commission