



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021-103: To rezone the property known as 711 Dawn Street from the M-1 Light Industrial District to the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 3, 2021

PETITIONER

Douglas C. Dunlap

LOCATION

711 Dawn Street

PURPOSE

To rezone the property known as 711 Dawn Street from the M-1 Light Industrial District to the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is to rezone the property to the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District for future infill development.

Staff finds that the B-7 District is an appropriate zoning district to enable development that would be generally consistent with the recommendations of the Master Plan and Industrial Mixed Use land use designation, and would enable continued revitalization of the area.

Staff finds that the proposed rezoning is consistent with changing conditions in the area, in which vacant or underutilized parcels, many of which have historically been used for industrial purposes, are being redeveloped for residential and mixed-use purposes, based on market demand.

Therefore staff recommends approval of the Rezoning request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Chamberlayne Industrial Center neighborhood at the corner of Dawn Street and Tazwell Street. The property is currently improved with a 4,597 sq. ft. building and a 2,346 sq. ft. building, both of which are situated on a 24,000 sq. ft. (.55 acre) parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is intending to construct a new mixed-use building including affordable, multi-family housing with commercial uses on the ground level.

Richmond 300 Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Industrial Mixed-Use. Such areas are "formerly traditional industrial areas that are transitioning to mixed-use because of their proximity to growing neighborhoods and changes in market conditions. These areas may still retain some light industrial uses."

A mix of building types with low-scale, post-industrial buildings that are adapted for a new use are adjacent to new taller residential and/or office buildings. These areas allow "maker uses" to continue while encouraging more individuals to live, work, and play in the area. Buildings should have street-oriented façades with windows and door openings along street frontages. New light industrial uses are compatible with residential and office uses, and are attractively buffered. New developments continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Ground floor uses engage with and enliven the street.

Monolithic walls are discouraged, while windows, doors, storefronts, and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street are encouraged. Active commercial ground floor uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveway entrances are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages and minimal driveway entrances are allowed on secondary streets. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys where possible. Loading for trucks must be provided off-street.

Parking lots and parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.

Medium- to high density, three to eight stories.

Primary Uses: Retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space.
Secondary Uses: Institutional and government.

The subject property is also within the Lower Chamberlayne area of the VUU/Chamberlayne Neighborhood Plan, which provides the following vision:

The right-of-way of Chamberlayne Avenue south of Wickham Street is wider than in the north. From an infrastructure standpoint, this provides an opportunity to convert the two outer lanes to wider pedestrian sidewalks with amenities and landscaping as well as an area for on-street parking. Large blocks with vacant or low-density commercial uses should be redeveloped into higher-density mixed-use buildings. Ground floor commercial uses could include a grocery store. Apartments located in the upper floors would be highly desirable. Street improvements combined with redevelopment will transform this part of Chamberlayne from a highway to an attractive urban boulevard. New residential development along the golf course combined with new street connections to nearby eastern neighborhoods will greatly improve access and provide new housing options. The intent is to revitalize and provide opportunities for both renovation and new construction in this area.

Zoning

The intent of the B-7 district is to encourage a broad range of mixed land uses, including residential, commercial and compatible industrial and service uses. The district is intended to promote enhancement of the character of mixed-use areas that are undergoing revitalization and

adaptive reuse by providing for alternative economic use of existing structures, while enabling continuation of existing industrial and service uses. The district regulations are intended to encourage appropriate infill development on undeveloped land, promote adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings and enable redevelopment of properties where continuation of current uses or adaptive reuse is not feasible. The district regulations are also intended to safeguard the character of adjoining properties, to maintain the predominant existing streetscape character by providing continuity of building scale and setbacks, to enhance public safety and encourage an active pedestrian environment appropriate to the mixed-use character of the district by providing for windows in building façades along street frontages. Finally, the district regulations are intended to assure adequate accessible parking and safe vehicular and pedestrian circulation, to facilitate a streetscape with minimum setbacks along principal street frontages and to provide for limited interruption by driveways and vehicular traffic across public sidewalk areas along principal street frontages.

The City's Zoning Administration reviewed the application and provided the following comments:

ZONING AND USE:

Existing (M-1): The existing zoning designation allow for a wide variety of commercial uses, including light industrial (warehouse, contractor's shops, light manufacturing), auto-related uses and drive-up uses. Dwelling uses are not permitted.

Proposed (B-7): The proposed zoning designation is intended for industrial areas transitioning to mixed-use. A variety of commercial uses are permitted, however auto-related uses and drive-up uses are not permitted. Any use legally established prior to the rezoning that is permitted in the M-1 or M-2 district, but not otherwise in the B-7 district, is not subject to nonconforming use regulations. Dwelling units, other than single and two family dwellings, are permitted by-right, and there would not be a non-dwelling use requirement along either street frontage of the subject parcel.

A plan of development is required in the B-7 district for any new building containing more than ten dwelling units, and for any new building or addition occupying a cumulative total of more than 1,000 SF of lot coverage and where vehicular circulation is provided.

Based on the orientation of other buildings on the block, the principal street frontage is presently Dawn Street. This may change based upon the orientation of proposed new buildings. There are no existing priority street frontages for the parcel, and none are proposed with the rezoning application.

YARDS:

Existing (M-1): There are no yard (setback) requirements under the current M-1 zoning designation.

Proposed (B-7): Under the proposed B-7 zoning designation, no front yard (setback) is required, provided that in no case shall a front yard with a depth greater than ten feet be permitted, and provided further that not more than ten percent of the building wall of the street level story along the street shall be set back more than ten feet. The only exception for exceeding the max front yard setback is for a pedestrian plaza or outside dining as approved by the Planning Director with a recommendation from the Urban Design Committee. Entrance features may be setback from the façade a distance no more than two times with width of the entranceway. There would be no side or rear yard (setback) requirements.

HEIGHT:

Existing (M-1): The height limit under the current zoning designation is dictated by an inclined pane (1:3 ratio) from the centerline of abutting street and from other property lines (1:2 ratio). Base height limit is 45'.

Proposed (B-7): The height limit under the proposed zoning designation is five stories, with each story other than the ground floor level being not less than ten feet and not greater than fifteen feet. This parcel would not be considered a special case to authorize additional height. The story height requirement for each story is 10'-15' with no restriction on the height of the ground level.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE IN B-7:

The location of any parking areas must not be between the main building and the principal or priority street frontage, nor shall they be located closer to the principal or priority street frontage than the main building. No new driveways are permitted on the principal or priority street frontage for each parcel. Parking decks located along the principal street frontage must be screened by another use along the entirety of the frontage with a depth of at least 20', and must be screened from other street frontages by a structural material with an opacity of not less than 45 percent. Fenestration requirements will be applicable to principal and priority street frontages (30% for dwelling units, operable window/doors); 60% for ground floor commercial uses (30% for upper stories)

PARKING REQUIREMENTS:

The parking requirement for uses other than dwellings is per the table in Sec. 30-710.1 (a) of the zoning ordinance, provided that in no case shall the parking requirement for uses whose requirement is determined by floor area be more than one space per 300 square feet. Multifamily dwellings require one space per unit. On-street spaces count towards meeting the off-street parking requirement and on-site spaces for dwelling uses may be shared with non-dwelling uses, provided that the non-dwelling use not be routinely open between 6 PM and 8 AM. The parking requirement is reduced by 50% for uses located within buildings constructed prior to July 1, 2017.

Street buffer and internal screening requirements related to parking areas will be required for new parking areas in accordance with Sections 30-710.13 through 30-710.16. Bike parking will be required for multifamily and parking deck uses.

Surrounding Area

Adjacent and nearby properties are primarily zoned M-1 Light Industrial. A mix of commercial, office, industrial, and vacant land uses are present in the vicinity of the subject property.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Chamberlayne Industrial Center Civic Association of the proposed Rezoning. Staff has not received any letters of support, or opposition, for this application.

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