



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021-115: To conditionally rezone the properties known as 2 Manchester Road and 4 Manchester Road, from the RF-1 Riverfront District to the B-4 Central Business District (conditional), upon certain proffered conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 17, 2021

PETITIONER

T. Preston Lloyd, Jr., Esq., as attorney-in-fact for Riverfront Silos II, LLC

LOCATION

2 Manchester Road and 4 Manchester Road

PURPOSE

To conditionally rezone the properties known as 2 Manchester Road and 4 Manchester Road, from the RF-1 Riverfront District to the B-4 Central Business District (conditional), upon certain proffered conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The property owner has requested a conditional rezoning to the B-4 Central Business District with proffered conditions. This will enable development of the subject property at greater density and building height than the current RF-1 District allows. It should be noted that the applicant is discussing the proffered conditions with staff to confirm terms and obligations. Modifications to the proffered conditions may be provided to the Planning Commission prior to the May 17 hearing.

Staff finds that the proposed rezoning is consistent with the recommendations of Richmond 300, specifically pertaining to Destination Mixed-Use areas and the Manchester Node. The recommended future land use of Destination Mixed-Use includes commercial, multi-family residential, cultural and open space uses. The development style envisioned is higher-density, transit-oriented on vacant or underutilized sites. New development should be urban in form and may be of larger scale than the existing context. The recommended intensity is high with new buildings typically a minimum of five stories. Construction of new buildings with more than ten units or any building with greater than 50,000 square feet of floor area will require plan of development review. During this process the building plans will be reviewed to ensure compliance with the proffers and to ensure that the building design is respectful of its surroundings while meeting the Master Plan's urban design elements.

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, commercial, office and mixed-use purposes, based on market demand.

Therefore staff recommends approval of the Conditional Rezoning request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The proposed rezoning would cover two contiguous properties consisting of a combined 2.16 acres of land improved with the Southern States silos. The property is located in the Old Town Manchester neighborhood at the intersection of Manchester Road and Hull Street.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant intends to develop the site under the requirements of the B-4 Central Business District.

Richmond 300 Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Plan designates the site as Destination Mixed-Use which is described as "key gateways featuring prominent destinations, such as retail, sports venues, and large employers, as well as housing and open space. Located at the convergence of several modes of transportation, including Pulse BRT or other planned transit improvements."

The development style shall be "Higher density, transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites. New development should be urban in form, may be of larger scale than existing context, and, where relevant, should pay special attention to the historic character of the existing context. Development should enhance the public realm and create a sense of place. Many buildings are vertically mixed-use. 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. Driveway entrances are required to be of alleys whenever possible; new driveways are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages. Surface parking is 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. Parking requirements are reduced to allow more market-based parking strategies, including shared parking. Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories." (p. 64)

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

Secondary Uses: Institutional and government.

The properties are also located within the vicinity of the Manchester National/Regional, Priority Growth Node. Priority Growth Nodes are areas "...where the City is encouraging the most significant growth in population and development over the next 20 years." (p. 24) The Vision for the Manchester node is seen as an area that "...continues to increase in population and economic activity to support a thriving business corridor along Hull Street. The formerly industrial part of Manchester provides jobs as well as housing. Manchester is connected to South Richmond and the Downtown Core by a network of greenways along former railways, along roads, and along Manchester Canal. A variety of housing options in Manchester are available to low-, moderate-,

and high-income individuals. Manchester’s interconnected street grid is enhanced with street trees and improved infrastructure to support pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.”(p. 34)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The properties are currently located in the RF-1 Riverfront District.

The intent of the B-4 District is to define the urban center of the City of Richmond by promoting dense, transit-oriented development with greater building height than elsewhere in the region. The district regulations are intended to promote redevelopment, placemaking, and development of surface parking lots to create high-quality urban spaces. Such regulations are also intended to improve streetscape character and enhance public safety by encouraging an active pedestrian environment consistent with the mixed-use character of the district and by providing uniform setbacks, first floor commercial uses, and windows in building façades along street frontages.

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

The proposal is to rezone 2.16 acres at 2 and 4 Manchester Road from RF-1 (Riverfront) to B-4C (Central Business- Conditional) A set of voluntary proffers are being offered with the rezoning. Please be advised of the following changes with the rezoning:

ZONING AND USE:

Both the current and proposed zoning district permit dwellings units provided that buildings located along street designated as street-oriented commercial must contain “other permitted uses” on the ground floor adjacent to such street. Parking decks are permitted in both cases, but must not occupy the ground floor of a building along the principal street frontage of the lot. Hotels are permitted in both districts, and in both cases require another permitted principal use as specified in the district regulations to occupy the ground floor. A plan of development is required in both the current and proposed zoning district for any new building containing more than ten dwelling units, for parking decks and for hotels.

YARDS:

No yard (front, side or rear) would be required under the B-4 zoning district. The existing zoning district has required side and rear yards of 25 feet.

HEIGHT:

The proposed zoning district has no height limit, except that no portion of a building shall penetrate an inclined plane originated at the centerline of each abutting street and extending over the lot at an inclination of one foot horizontal for each four feet vertical. Note that the centerline of Manchester Road will likely change based on improvements resulting from the multifamily development to the south. Story height will established by the definition contained within the zoning ordinance.

The existing zoning district has a height limit of six stories and a height minimum of two stories.

ADDITIONAL FORM REQUIREMENTS:

The requirements for areas devoted to parking or circulation of vehicles is the same in both the existing and proposed zoning district.

The minimum useable open space ratio required for the portion of the building devoted to dwelling uses is 0.15 under the current zoning district and would be reduced to 0.08 under the proposed zoning district.

There is no floor area ratio requirement under the current zoning district and the proposed zoning district has a maximum ratio of 6.0

The requirements for building façade fenestration is the same for both the current and proposed zoning district.

The current zoning district has requirements related to land coverage and building dimensions and spacing in order to protect the view shed of the James River. The proposed zoning district does not have requirements related to land coverage or building dimensions and spacing.

Parking required under the current zoning district is one space per dwelling unit and one space per three hundred square feet for commercial (depending on the specific use, less parking may be required); hotels require one parking space per guestroom for the first 100 rooms, and 1 per 2 guestrooms over 100. Under the proposed zoning designation, the parking requirement for a multi-family building is none for the first sixteen (16) units and one space per four units over sixteen (16). No parking is required for a mixed use building in the B-4 district. Commercial uses do not have a parking requirement in the B-4 district, except that hotels require parking at a rate of one space per 4 guestrooms. Parking decks are not permitted on the ground floor of any building in the B-4 district (the first twenty feet in depth of the building along the principal street frontage must be permitted uses other than parking decks). Bike parking- in both the existing and proposed district- is required for multifamily development (both short-term and long-term).

The applicant has provided the following statement and proffered conditions that are attached to the ordinance:

The undersigned, Riverfront Silos, LLC, a Virginia limited liability company (“Owner”), as owner of parcels designated by the City of Richmond, Virginia (the “City”) as Tax Parcel Nos. S0000101006 and S0000101005 (the “Property”), voluntarily agrees for itself, its agents, personal representatives, successors and assigns that in the event the Property is rezoned to B-4 Central Business District then the use of the subject Property shall be in substantial conformance with the following conditions. In the event the above-referenced rezoning is not granted by City Council as applied for by the undersigned, then these proffers shall be withdrawn and are null and void.

1. POD Design Criteria. In addition to the criteria by which all plans of development are evaluated, plan(s) of development for the Property shall be evaluated to determine if building design is in line with the following form elements:

- a. Hold the corner. Spaces at the intersection of Manchester Road and Hull Street shall have active ground floors that promote pedestrian interest and engagement.
- b. Entrances face the street. Main entrances to businesses and residences shall face the street to facilitate pedestrian activity.
- c. Transparency. Façade fenestration shall be visible from the street. This is especially important on the ground floor, where fenestration should occupy a higher percentage of the building face.
- d. Façade articulation. Long, monolithic non-glass façades shall be broken up and made more human-scale by varying the streetwall plane, colors, and materials.

e. Screened parking/services. Attractive landscaping shall extend to the sidewalk to help maintain a streetwall and mitigate the disruption caused by surface parking lots and utilitarian services.

2. Road Improvements. To provide for adequate access to the Property at the time of development, the Owner shall be responsible for certain road improvements (the "Road Improvements"). If any of the Road Improvements are provided by others, as determined by the Department of Public Works, then the specified Road Improvements shall no longer be required by the Owner. No final certificate of occupancy shall be issued for the Property prior to completion by the Owner and acceptance by the City of the following Road Improvements, to the extent deemed warranted by the Department of Public Works at the time of plan of development review:

a. Construction of intersection control (i.e. traffic signal or roundabout) at the intersection of Manchester Road and Hull Street, if warranted. The obligation of the Owner to construct intersection control shall expire upon the issuance of the final occupancy permit for the Property.

b. Construction of Decatur Street in conformance with the Right-of-Way Design and Construction Standards Manual, with modifications approved by the Department of Public Works, as a two-lane undivided road section to include standard pedestrian accommodations from the E. 1st Street intersection to the Manchester Road intersection, including a bridge crossing over Manchester Canal to specifications approved by the Department of Public Works and Department of Public Utilities.

c. Dedication to the City, free and unrestricted, of any additional right-of-way (or easements) required for the Road Improvements. In the event that any such right-of-way is located on property not owned by Owner (an "Off-Site Right-of-Way"), the Owner may request, in writing, that City acquire such right-of-way as a public road improvement. All reasonable costs associated with the acquisition of Off-Site Right-of-Way(s) shall be borne by the Owner other than costs associated with acquisition of Off-Site Right-of-Way for a roundabout, if deemed necessary by the Department of Public Works, which shall be acquired at the City's sole cost. In the event that the City elects not to assist the Owner in acquisition of Off-Site Right-of-Way, the Owner shall be relieved of the obligation to acquire the Off-Site Right-of-Way and shall only be obligated to provide the Road Improvements to the extent they can be constructed within available right-of way, as determined by the Department of Public Works.

3. These proffers are in addition to any applicable City laws, policies, and requirements and in no way alter or abrogate such laws, polices, and requirements.

Surrounding Area

Properties to the north, east and west are also located in the RF-1 District. Properties to the south are in the M-2 Heavy Industrial District and B-4 District. A mix of vacant, industrial, commercial, and residential sites are present in the vicinity of the subject property.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Manchester Alliance Civic Association of the proposed Rezoning. Staff received a letter of support from the Association for this application.

Staff Contact: Matthew Ebinger, Principal Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-6308