



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021-282: To rezone the property known as 925 East 4th Street from the M-2 Heavy Industrial District to the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: October 18, 2021

PETITIONER

Jennifer D. Mullen, Esq.

LOCATION

925 East 4th Street

PURPOSE

To rezone the property known as 925 East 4th Street from the M-2 Heavy 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, which allows a greater range of uses than the current M-2 Heavy Industrial District.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan pertaining to the Destination Mixed-Use Category. The allowable uses and densities within the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District all align well with the aforementioned Master Plan category.

Therefore staff recommends approval of the Rezoning request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property consists of approximately 42,689 SF, or .98 acres, of land and is improved with a building constructed 1969, totaling 7,600 sq. ft. The property is located in the Old Town Manchester Neighborhood between Gordon and Dinwiddie Avenues.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is requesting to rezone the property to the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates these parcels as Destination Mixed Use. Such areas are defined 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." Development consists of 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.

Intensity: Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories.

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

Secondary Uses: Institutional and government. (p. 64)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is M-2 Heavy Industrial District. The City of Richmond Zoning Administration has reviewed the application and has offered the following comments:

The proposal is to rezone a property consisting of a single parcel that includes approximately 0.98 acres from the M-2 Heavy Industrial to the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District. In doing so, the existing warehouse building would be razed and a new multi-family building constructed. Furthermore, as the need arises, the vacant portions of the Property would be redeveloped for a variety of uses, to be informed by the guidance offered by the Master Plan.

"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 facades along street frontages. Finally, the district regulations are intended to assure adequate accessible parking and safe vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and 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"

Please be advised of the following changes with the rezoning:

ZONING AND USE:

Current:

The current M-2 zoning district permits a wide variety of high intensity and, at times, obnoxious commercial and industrial uses, however, does not allow dwelling units.

Proposed:

The proposed B-7 zoning district designation is intended for industrial areas transitioning to mixed-use. A variety of commercial uses are permitted, however drive-up uses are not permitted. 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.

YARDS:

Current: The current M-2 zoning district has no yard requirements.

Proposed: The proposed B-7 zoning district has no front yard setback requirement, 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.

HEIGHT:

Current:

The current M-2 zoning district has a maximum height of 45' with additional height permitted, subject to additional criteria.

Proposed:

The proposed B-7 zoning district has a height limit of five stories, with limits on story heights except for the ground floor.

Fenestration requirements are applicable to the principal street frontage (East 4th Street). (30% for dwelling units, operable window/doors); 60% for ground floor commercial uses (30% for upper stories).

PARKING REQUIREMENTS:

Current:

The current M-2 district off-street parking requirements are dictated by the chart found in Section 30-710.1 (a) in the zoning ordinance. On-street parking fronting the parcel is eligible to count towards off-street 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. Multi-family 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.

Street buffer and internal screening requirements related to parking areas is required for new parking areas in accordance with Sections 30-710.13 through 30-710.16,

Bike parking is required for multifamily and parking deck uses.

Proposed:

The proposed B-7 district's off-street parking requirements are dictated by the chart found in Section 30-710.1 (a) in the zoning ordinance. B-7 requires parking for dwelling units (1 per unit) and all commercial uses (with a max of 1 space per 300 square feet of floor area). Bike parking is required for dwelling uses and parking decks.

On-street parking spaces within portions of public right-of-way abutting respective property may count towards meeting off-street parking requirements,

ADDITIONAL FORM REQUIREMENTS IN THE PROPOSED B-7 DISTRICT:

Location of parking and circulation areas shall not be located between the main building on a lot and the street line, nor shall such areas be located closer to the street than the main building on the lot, which also applies to lots having more than one street frontage along both the principal street frontage and the priority street frontage.

Facilities for the deposit and collection of trash cannot be located within any front or street side yard. Screening of parking areas and refuse areas is governed by sections 30-660 and 30-710.12.

Driveways from streets. No driveway intersecting a street which constitutes the principal street frontage (East 4th Street). Two driveways currently access the site and one (1) should be closed and the owner shall seek to utilize a shared driveway with the adjoining property.

Surrounding Area

Currently, all adjacent properties are zoned B-6 Mixed-Use Business District. Properties to the east are zoned M-2 Heavy Industrial.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, the Manchester Alliance, as well as the Blackwell and Oak Grove Civic Associations of the proposed Rezoning.

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