



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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To: Planning Commission
From: Department of Community Development
Date: August 12, 2020 (Regular Meeting)
Re: Rezoning – 225 and 245 Old South High Street (M-1 to B-1C)

Summary:

Public hearing to consider a request from C-Side LC to rezone a +/-33,287 square foot property from M-1, General Industrial District to B-1C, Central Business District Conditional. The property is addressed as 225 and 245 Old South High Street and is identified as tax map number 25-G-17.

Background:

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Mixed Use. The Mixed Use designation includes both existing and proposed areas for mixed use. Mixed Use areas shown on the Land Use Guide map are intended to combine residential and non-residential uses in neighborhoods, where the different uses are finely mixed instead of separated. Mixed Use can take the form of a single building, a single parcel, a city block, or entire neighborhoods. Quality architectural design features and strategic placement of green spaces for large scale developments will ensure development compatibility of a mixed use neighborhood with the surrounding area. These areas are prime candidates for “live-work” and traditional neighborhood developments (TND). Live-work developments combine residential and commercial uses allowing people to both live and work in the same area. The scale and massing of buildings is an important consideration when developing in Mixed Use areas. Commercial uses would be expected to have an intensity equivalent to a Floor Area Ratio of at least 0.4, although the City does not measure commercial intensity in that way.

Downtown is an existing area that exhibits and is planned to continue to contain a mix of land uses. The downtown Mixed Use area often has no maximum residential density, however, development should take into consideration the services and resources that are available (such as off-street parking) and plan accordingly. Residential density in Mixed Use areas outside of downtown should be around 24 dwelling units per acre, and all types of residential units are permitted: single-family detached, single-family attached (duplexes and townhomes), and multi-family buildings. Large scale developments, which include multi-family buildings are encouraged to include single-family detached and/or attached dwellings.

The following land uses are located on and adjacent to the property:

Site: Vacant storage warehouse and offices, zoned M-1

North: Single-family detached dwelling, zoned R-3

- East: Across Old South High Street, properties owned by C&W Railroad, other properties used for warehousing, zoned M-1, and a single-family detached dwelling, zoned R-2
- South: Single-family detached dwelling, zoned R-2
- West: Across South High Street, Veterans Memorial Park (JMU), zoned R-2, and a single-family detached dwelling, zoned R-3

Key Issues:

The applicant is requesting to rezone a +/-33,287 square foot property from M-1, General Industrial District to B-1C, Central Business District Conditional. The parcel has street frontages on Old South High Street and South High Street (Route 42) and is located approximately 250-feet south from the intersection of Old South High Street and West Bruce Street. The property is known as being the location of Howard A. Spangler Co., a wholesaler of plastic, paper, and custodial supplies, which operated for decades in this location and closed in 2017.

If the rezoning request is approved, the applicant plans to renovate the buildings to create approximately 19 multi-family dwelling (apartment) units. Attached is a conceptual site layout for the property, as well as, conceptual layouts for the multi-family dwelling units within the buildings. Among other details, off-street parking and landscaping requirements, emergency access, will be reviewed during the engineered comprehensive site plan and building permit process to ensure that all regulations are met.

With the rezoning request, the applicant has proffered the following (written verbatim):

1. The maximum building height is forty feet.
2. There shall be no less than fifteen parking spaces located on the property.

Regarding the first proffer, rezoning to the B-1 district without proffers would allow buildings to reach a maximum height of 75-feet and have no minimum setbacks. The property is surrounded by parcels in different zoning districts including R-2, R-3, and M-1. The R-2, Residential District allows a maximum building height of 35-feet while the R-3, Medium Density Residential District allows a maximum height of 35-feet or 40-feet depending on the building's use. The M-1, General Industrial District allows a maximum height of 75-feet, however, any structure greater than 35-feet when the parcel abuts a residential district must add one additional foot of side and rear yard setback for each foot above 35-feet in addition to the minimum side and rear yard setbacks of 10-feet. The applicant has proffered a maximum building height of 40-feet to address staff's concerns that redevelopment to a B-1 zoned property could include buildings that are 35 to 40-feet taller than the maximum height of buildings allowed on neighboring properties.

Regarding the second proffer, since there are no minimum off-street parking requirements in the B-1 district, the existing parking areas could be reduced or eliminated, which could add parking demand onto city streets, namely Old South High Street. The Department of Public Works and Harrisonburg Police Department have noted that there have been on-going challenges and complaints received about the lack of on-street parking available along Old South High Street. The applicant understood staff's concern and has proffered a minimum of 15 on-site parking spaces. Note that nine fewer parking spaces are proffered than the 24 spaces shown on the conceptual layout. The applicant explained to staff that it is their desire to construct all 24 parking spaces and to close the entrance onto South High Street as illustrated on the conceptual layout. However, in order for fire apparatus to maneuver onto

and around the property to access the buildings, the entrance to South High Street might need to remain open which would preclude the ability to have parking spaces in that area and the parking spaces closest to Old South High Street might also need to be removed from the plans. Conversations with the Fire Department and the Engineering Division of the Department of Community Development will continue through the engineered comprehensive site plan phase of development.

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use designation of Mixed Use supports the rezoning request to B-1C for this parcel and the listed proffers address future redevelopment concerns. Staff recommends approval of the rezoning request as submitted.

Environmental Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Prior Actions:

N/A

Alternatives:

- (a) Recommend approval of the rezoning request; or
- (b) Recommend denial of the rezoning request.

Community Engagement:

As required, the request was published in the local newspaper twice advertising for Planning Commission's public hearing. The advertisement was published as shown below:

Rezoning – 225 and 245 Old South High Street (M-1 to B-1)

Public hearing to consider a request from C-Side LC to rezone a +/-33,287 square foot property from M-1, General Industrial District to B-1, Central Business District. The Zoning Ordinance states that the M-1, General Industrial District is intended primarily for manufacturing, processing, storage, and distribution activities, which are not properly associated with, nor compatible with, residential and institutional development. The B-1, Central Business District is intended as an urban and regional center for the conduct of commercial, financial, professional and governmental activities to which the public requires direct and frequent access. No minimum lot size or setback restrictions exist in the B-1, Central Business District. The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Mixed Use. Mixed Use areas are intended to combine residential and non-residential uses in neighborhoods, where the different uses are finely mixed instead of separated. The downtown Mixed Use area often has no maximum residential density, however, development should take into consideration the services and resources that are available (such as off-street parking) and plan accordingly. Residential density in Mixed Use areas outside of downtown should be around 24 dwelling units per acre, and all types of residential units are permitted. Large scale developments, which include multi-family buildings are encouraged to include single-family detached and/or attached dwellings. The property is addressed as 225 and 245 Old South High Street and is identified as tax map parcel 25-G-17.

In addition, adjoining property owners were notified of the public hearing; the property was posted with signage advertising the request; and a notice was provided on the City's website at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/public-hearings>.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends alternative (a) approval of the rezoning request.

Attachments:

1. Site maps
2. Application, applicant letter, and supporting documents
3. Conceptual site development layout

Review:

N/A