



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021-017: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 2525 Belt Boulevard, 2613 Belt Boulevard, and 2701 Belt Boulevard for the purpose of up to 36 single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 16, 2021

PETITIONER

Brian Jackson – Hirschler Fleischer

LOCATION

2525, 2613, and 2701 Belt Boulevard

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the properties known as 2525 Belt Boulevard, 2613 Belt Boulevard, and 2701 Belt Boulevard for the purpose of up to 36 single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is proposing to construct 36 single-family attached dwellings on properties which are currently zoned R-4 Single Family Residential. Such a use is not permitted in the R-4 District. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Richmond 300 Plan pertaining to the housing types within the Residential Land Use category.

Staff further finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area.

Staff further finds that the proposal provides opportunities for increasing the City's stock of affordable housing as recommended by the Plan's Objective 14.3 "Create 10,000 new affordable housing units for low- and very low-income households over the next 10 years". As the units within the proposed development are to be sold as affordable, this project helps to achieve this objective.

Staff further finds that the proposal provides opportunities for the City to increase the overall area of natural open space within a designated Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Area, which assists in achieving the Richmond 300 Plan's Objective 16.4 to "Increase green stormwater infrastructure", as the proposal has designated the parcel at 2525 Belt Boulevard as "open space (tree preservation)".

Staff finds that with the ordinance conditions the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, are met. Specifically, staff finds that the proposed

use would not be detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved and would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved.

Therefore staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject properties consist of vacant parcels that are a combined 6 acres. 2.6 acres of which will be preserved as wooded open space. The remaining 3.5 acres would be developed as proposed. The properties are located in the Cherry Gardens neighborhood along Belt Boulevard between the Formex Street and Terminal Avenue.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is proposing a Special Use Permit which would authorize 36 single-family attached dwelling units located on private streets, with driveway parking and on-street parking, and a pocket park/greenspace. The density of the proposed development is approximately 6 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Plan designates a future land use for the parcels to be developed as Residential. Such areas are described as neighborhoods consisting primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature.

Development Style: Houses on medium-sized and large-sized lots in a largely auto-dependent environment. Homes are setback from the street. Future developments continue and/or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Future single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family residential buildings are built to a scale and design that is consistent with existing buildings.

Ground Floor: Not applicable. **Mobility:** Bicycle and pedestrian access are prioritized and accommodated. Low residential density means that it is not possible to provide frequent transit within these areas; however, frequent transit may be found at the edges of these areas within more intense future land use designations. Many homes have driveways and/or garages, which are located off an alley behind the home if an alley is present.

Intensity: Buildings are generally one to three stories. Lot sizes generally range up to 5,000 to 20,000+ sq. ft. Residential density of 2 to 10 housing units per acre.

Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Duplexes and small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), institutional, and cultural. Secondary uses may be found along major streets.

The Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the portion of Belt Boulevard, along which the subject property is located, as a Major Residential Street.

Objective 14.3 of the Plan states “Create 10,000 new affordable housing units for low- and very low-income households over the next 10 years”.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The properties are currently under R-4 Single-Family Residential zoning requirements.

The subject property is zoned in the R-4 (Single-Family Residential) district. The proposal is to construct thirty-six (36) new single-family attached dwellings in four (4) unit clusters. Single-family attached dwellings are not a permitted principal use in the R-4 district a Special Use Permit will be required to authorize this use.

A formal subdivision approved by City Planning Commission will be required to create the thirty-six (36) lots and residual common shown on the submitted plans.

The special use permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to 36 single-family attached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) No less than one parking space per dwelling shall be provided for the Special Use and may be provided through the use of driveways or on-street parking.

(c) All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

(d) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed the height shown on the Plans.

(e) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

(f) A walkway shall be provided for each dwelling from the front entrance of the dwelling to the sidewalk.

(g) Prior to the issuance of any certificate of occupancy for the second single-family attached dwelling of the Special Use, the subdivision of up to 36 residential lots, substantially as shown on the Plans, shall be accomplished by obtaining the necessary approvals from the City and recording the appropriate plats among the land records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond.

4(c) Facilities for the collection of refuse shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Director of Public Works. Such facilities shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from adjacent properties and public streets.

Surrounding Area

The properties are within a larger R-4 Single Family Residential District along Belt Boulevard. A mix of single-family residential, with some industrial and vacant land uses are present in the vicinity.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$67,703. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income which equates to \$20,311 or \$1,693 per month or less to avoid a housing cost burden.*

Based upon the median household income for the Richmond region and the estimated price of units provided by the applicant, the new housing units are projected to be affordable to households making below 60% the Area Median Income (AMI).**

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates)*

*** (Based upon VHDA fixed-rate, 30-year mortgage, with 20% down and 4% interest)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Deerbourne and Cherry Creek Civic Associations of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has received a letter of support from an area resident and Councilperson Trammell.

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