



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2025-024: To authorize the special use of the property known as 2811 Rady Street for the purpose of four multifamily dwellings containing an aggregate of up to 352 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions. (6th District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 18, 2025

PETITIONER

Preston Lloyd

LOCATION

2811 Rady Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize an up to 352-unit multifamily development within an R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District, and a M-2 Heavy Industrial District. Multifamily uses are not currently allowed by sections 30-412.1 and 30-454.1, regarding permitted principal uses, of the Code of the City of Richmond (2022), as amended; A Special Use Permit is, therefore, required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposal is not consistent with the City's Master Plan pertaining to the Industrial land use category, which does not include residential land use as a recommended land use. Moreover, the majority of the property is currently zoned M-2 – Heavy Industrial, which accommodates the highest intensity of industrial development.

Staff finds that the safeguards contained within the City Charter relative to the granting of Special Use Permits are not met. Specifically, staff finds that the proposed use would be detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved, in that it would remove land designated for industrial uses, which are necessary for a thriving urban economy and the provision of employment for local residents.

Staff finds that the proposed use fulfills Objective 14.3 to “Create 10,000 new affordable housing units for low- and very low-income households over the next 10 years.” Units will be available to household incomes that are 60% of the Area Median Income.

Staff finds that the proposed development creates a new pedestrian and vehicular link with Burns Street and pedestrian improvements along Rady Court and Street, connecting new residents with a safe route to the Highland Park neighborhood and Six-Points micro-node.

Staff finds that the proposed site design fulfills Objective 1.4a to “Implement urban design and architecture strategies that maintain and enhance the unique character of Richmond’s residential districts” Staff negotiated with the applicant to develop alternative plans that include the following:

1. Pedestrian connectivity incorporated into the street design by adding on-street parking, tree-lawns, and sidewalks.
2. Buildings that address new streets appropriately with most of the parking to the rear of buildings.
3. Possible future street connections to adjacent neighborhoods.
4. Site design that focuses on prioritizing and expanding the public realm, community building, and resident walkability, while relegating vehicle storage to the rear of buildings.

Despite the provision of affordable housing units within a properly laid-out development, staff reiterates that the proposed development is not consistent with the Industrial land use designation of the property.

Therefore, staff recommends denial of the Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property consists of a 996,217 sq. ft., 23 acre, unimproved parcel of land. The property is within the Magnolia Industrial Center neighborhood at the corner of Rady Street and Rady Court.

Proposed Use of the Property

Four multifamily dwellings containing an aggregate of up to 352 dwelling units, and a swimming pool, clubhouse, and amenity area. The proposed density of the parcel is 352 units upon 23 acres which equals 15 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Industrial. This use is comprised of "Manufacturing and production areas that primarily feature processing, research and development, warehousing, and distribution."

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Development Style:

The arrangement of structures, parking and circulation areas, and open spaces should recognize the unique needs of industrial users. Industrial areas have a design aesthetic that buffers industrial uses from other adjacent uses.

Ground Floor: Not applicable.

Mobility:

Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access is accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Parking lots and parking areas are located to the rear of street-facing buildings. Vehicle entrances are located off alleys or secondary streets.

Intensity:

One to three stories with exceptions for unique building features relating to that industrial use.

Primary Uses:
Industrial and open space.

Secondary Uses:
Retail/office/personal service.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The subject property is located within an R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District, and a M-2 Heavy Industrial District. Multifamily uses are not currently allowed by sections 30-412.1 and 30-454.1, regarding permitted principal uses, of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020).

This special use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as four multifamily dwellings containing an aggregate of up to 352 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The Property shall include a swimming pool, clubhouse, and amenity area, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The Property shall include 88 long-term bicycle storage spaces and 17 short-term bicycle parking spaces, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed the height as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- All sidewalks fronting proposed buildings shall be a minimum of 5 feet in width and shall be separated from parking areas by a minimum 4-foot buffer zone that includes trees planted in accordance with the City of Richmond, Department of Public Works, Urban Forestry Division standards.
- 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.
- The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including the following: (i) extension and improvement of Burns Street from its intersection with Detroit Street in a southerly direction to the boundary line of the Property connecting with private access improvements on the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans, which shall be improved as a "Local Street" with curb and gutter, and sidewalk along the eastern side of the street, and the terminus of which shall be designed and constructed with an appropriate turnaround with corresponding public easement, all as approved by the Director of Public Works in connection with a building permit review; (ii) construction of a pedestrian crosswalk installed across Rady Street at Rady Court, substantially as shown on the Plans, and (iii) construction of sidewalk within the right-of-way of Rady Court, substantially as shown on the Plans. Such right-of-way

improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works. All improvements and work within the public right-of-way shall be (i) completed in accordance with the requirements of the Director of Public Works, (ii) considered completed only upon written confirmation by the Director of Public Works or the designee thereof that such improvements and work are in accordance with such requirements, and (iii) transferred to the City, following the written confirmation by the Director of Public Works or the designee thereof, pursuant to a transfer of interest document approved as to form by the City Attorney and accepted by the Chief Administrative Officer or the designee thereof on behalf of the City. The Chief Administrative Officer or the designee thereof, for and on behalf of the City, is hereby authorized to accept, in the manner for which this subsection provides, all improvements and work required by and meeting the requirements of this subsection. The final certificate of occupancy shall not be issued for the Property until all requirements of this subsection are fully satisfied.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding land uses are primarily institutional and single-family residential to the north within the Highland Park neighborhood, within Institutional and R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential Districts. To the south, within M-2 Heavy Industrial and M-1 Light Industrial Districts, a Verizon facility, as well as manufacturing and warehousing facilities are located.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners of this application. Staff has received not received any letters of support, nor opposition, from nearby residents.

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