



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-351: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 6407 Midlothian Turnpike, 6413 Midlothian Turnpike, 6417 Midlothian Turnpike, and 6331 Old Warwick Road for the purpose of a multifamily development containing up to 122 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: December 4, 2023

PETITIONER

Roth Jackson Gibbons Condlin, PLC

LOCATION

6407 Midlothian Turnpike; 6413 Midlothian Turnpike; 6417 Midlothian Turnpike; and 6331 Old Warwick Road

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a special use permit for the properties known as 6407 Midlothian Turnpike, 6413 Midlothian Turnpike, 6417 Midlothian Turnpike, and 6331 Old Warwick Road for the purpose of a multifamily development. The subject properties are located within two zoning districts. The three Midlothian Turnpike parcels are located in the B-3 General Business District and the Old Warwick Road parcel is located in the OS Office-Service District. The proposal includes constructing two multi-family buildings containing a combined total of 122 affordable dwelling units. Dwelling uses are not a permitted principal use in the OS district; therefore, the applicant requests a Special Use Permit to allow the proposed use.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has reviewed the application and finds the proposal is generally consistent with the future land use recommendations. The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Destination Mixed Use and Residential and supports multi-family residential as a primary use. The 3.25-acre site is currently vacant land located along a Midlothian Turnpike, a Major Mixed-Use Street, which carries high volumes of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles. The plan calls for an internal access drive and sidewalk circulating through the site to promote connectivity to both streets, parking and amenity space. The higher density proposed at this location is consistent with the Destination Mixed-Use recommendations, which recommend higher density, transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites.

Staff finds that the amount of affordable housing proposed significantly contributes to meeting Objective 14.3 to "create 10,000 new affordable housing units for low- and very low-income households over the next 10 years." The development is estimated to serve residents earning between 30 percent and 60 percent of the median family income. Although Building 2 is located within a Residential designation, it is appropriately setback (~182 feet) from adjacent residential properties to the west and will be appropriately screened with perimeter landscaping and fencing. (Richmond 300, p. 152)

The proposed dwellings are located in the Midlothian/Chippenham neighborhood node which is envisioned as a walkable village center. This property has immediate access to public transit via a GRTC bus stop located along the Midlothian frontage, which is served by bus route 1C connecting residents to Downtown Richmond. As such, Staff finds that this proposal contributes to Objective 6.1 to “Increase the number of residents and jobs at Nodes and along enhanced transit corridors in a land development pattern that prioritizes multi-modal transportation options.” (Richmond 300, p. 109).

Staff finds that, with the ordinance conditions, the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, are met by the proposal. Staff finds that the proposed use would not be detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved, would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved, and would not create hazards, overcrowding of land, or interfere with public requirements and adequate light and air.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is in the Midlothian neighborhood and contains three parcels situated Midlothian Turnpike and one parcel along Old Warwick Road. The property is currently a 141,772 sq. ft. (3.25 acre) parcel of land. The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the Old Warwick Road fronted property as Residential.

Proposed Use of the Property

Multifamily development containing up to 122 dwelling units

Master Plan

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates future land use for the subject properties which include Destination Mixed-Use and Residential. The subject Midlothian Turnpike fronted properties are designated as Destination Mixed-Use, which is 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” (p. 64) A Residential designation describes, “Neighborhood consisting primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature.” (p. 54)

Destination Mixed-Use Recommendations:

Development Style: 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:

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.

Mobility:

Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be off 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.

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 (see Street Typologies Map).

Zoning

Dwelling uses are not a permitted principal use in the OS Office-Service District and a Special Use Permit is required to be adopted by City Council to permit the use.

Ordinance Conditions

If adopted, the Special Use Permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily development containing up to 122 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans. A playground shall also be provided on the Property.
- Up to 153 parking spaces shall be provided on the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.

- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed four stories. The story height shall be not less than ten feet and not greater than 15 feet, except that the ground floor of a building may be of greater height.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans. Each parking lot island shall contain one deciduous tree having a caliper of not less than two and a half inches.
- AB mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- In addition to signs permitted in all districts, pursuant to section 30-505 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, signs substantially as shown on the Plans shall also be permitted on the Property.
- Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the Special Use, a plan of development for the Special Use shall be approved by the Director of Planning and Development Review, or the designee thereof, pursuant to Article X, Division 4 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.
- 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 current zoning for the property is B-3 General Business District (Midlothian-fronted parcels) and OS Office-Service District (for Old Warwick Rd fronted parcels) and is situated in the Midlothian/Chippenham neighborhood/regional node which serves as a gateway into the City of Richmond from Chesterfield County. The location is sited along a corridor of B-3 business running along the Midlothian Turnpike with office (OS) and residential (R-3) zones to the south and residential zones (R-48; R-7; R-3) to the north. The immediate area is generally made up of commercial uses, with industrial, office, multifamily and residential in the vicinity. The density of the proposed application is 122 dwelling units upon 3.25 acres or 37.54 units per acre.

Affordability

The median family income for the Richmond region is currently \$109,400 per year.* The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$32,820 per year, or \$2,735 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden. The development will serve residents earning between 30% and 60% of the area median income.

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Regional)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners, as well as the Greater Woodstock Area Civic Association. Staff has not received written public comments.

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