



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2025-155 To authorize the conditional use of the property known as 505 West Leigh Street for the purpose of a lodginghouse, upon certain terms and conditions. (2nd District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 15, 2025

PETITIONER

Ethan Porter

LOCATION

505 West Leigh Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit for the Ronald McDonald House Charities to allow for a lodginghouse.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposal is permitted in the R-73 Residential Multifamily District by a conditional use permit.

Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Conditional Use Permits. 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 Conditional Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Jackson Ward neighborhood on West Leigh Street between Brook Road and Catherine Street. It is currently a 70,570 square foot (1.6 acre) parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

Lodginghouse.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject area as Neighborhood Mixed-Use which is defined as existing or new highly walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses.

Development Style: These areas feature a variety of building types that are close to one another and create a unified street wall. The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas

vary depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Setbacks, plazas, and parks create a sense of place and community gathering areas. New developments on larger parcels continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity within the neighborhood and to adjacent neighborhoods. In historic neighborhoods, small-scale commercial uses exist today or should be allowed to reestablish. In new neighborhoods, small scale commercial buildings should be introduced.

Ground Floor: Regardless of use, buildings should engage the street with features such as street-oriented façades with windows and door openings along street frontages. Appropriate setbacks, open space, front porches, elevated ground floors, and other features that provide a sense of privacy should be provided for residential uses.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveways are prohibited on Priority and Principal Street frontages. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys wherever possible. Parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.

Intensity: Building heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets. Parcels are generally between 1,500 and 5,000 sq. ft.

Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), and open space.

Secondary Uses: Large multifamily buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-73 Residential Multifamily District.

Sec. 30-410.1:1

-Lodginghouses are only permitted by a Conditional Use Permit.

This conditional use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- Pursuant to section 30-420.1:1 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, the Conditional Use of the Property shall be as a lodginghouse use, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- Pursuant to Chapter 30, Article X, Division 4 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, a site plan shall be required to implement the Conditional Use of the Property.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding land uses are a mix of residential and commercial.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Historic Jackson Ward Association, area residents and property owners. Staff has received no letters to date regarding the proposal.

Staff Contact: Shaianna Trump, Planner Associate, Land Use Administration, 804-646-7319