



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review ***Staff Report***

Ord. No. 2025-119: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 2111 Venable Street, 2113 Venable Street, 2115 Venable Street, 2115 1/2 Venable Street, 2117 Venable Street, and 2119 Venable Street for the purpose of up to fifteen single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions. (7th District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: June 3, 2025

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

2111 Venable Street, 2113 Venable Street, 2115 Venable Street, 2115 1/2 Venable Street, 2117 Venable Street, and 2119 Venable Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize up to fifteen single-family attached dwellings within the R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. While the use is permitted, certain lot feature requirements, including lot area and width, are not met. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the requested use is consistent with the City's Master Plan future land use designation of 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." Single-family houses are listed as an appropriate primary use in this district.

Staff further finds that single-family attached dwellings increase the variability of housing types throughout the city, which is consistent with the City's Master Plan Objective 14.5 to, "encourage more housing types throughout the city and greater density along enhanced transit corridors and at Nodes" (Richmond 300, p. 152).

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject properties are located in the Union Hill neighborhood on the south side of Venable Street, just west of its intersection with North 22nd Street. The parcels currently contain a surface parking lot and are comprised of a combined .403 acres of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

Fifteen Single-Family Attached Dwellings

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject area as Neighborhood Mixed-Use which is defined as an "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" (Richmond 300, p. 82).

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.

Intensity: Building heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets (see Street Typologies Map). 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-63 Multi-Family Urban Residential District. The following features of the proposed development do not comply with the current zoning regulations:

Sec. 30-419.5(2)

Single-family attached dwellings. Single-family attached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 2,200 square feet in area. Lot width shall be not less than 16 feet, except that the width of any lot at the end of a series of attached units shall be not less than 19 feet.

If approved, this special use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to fifteen single-family attached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No fewer than seven off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use, which are to be accessed via an access easement on the adjacent property, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories, 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 building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans, subject to the conditions of the Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the
- Commission of Architectural Review on June 25, 2024, in response to Application No. COA-144130-2024.
- Existing sidewalks and street improvements, including street trees, street tree wells, and cobblestones on Burton Street shall be maintained in their current condition, or, if damaged,
- repaired or replaced prior to the issuance of the final certificate of occupancy for the Special Use. Cobblestones along Burton Street shall be fully and correctly restored, in accordance with the requirements of the Director of Public Works, upon completion of any needed utility work.
- Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the Special Use, the establishment of up to fifteen residential lots, substantially as shown on the Plans, shall be accomplished by obtaining the necessary approvals from the City and recording the appropriate plats and deeds among the land records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond.

Surrounding Area

Surrounding properties are all located within the same R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. The area is generally single-family residential, with two places of worship present in the vicinity.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Union Hill Civic Association, area residents, and property owners of this request. Staff has received no letters of opposition to date regarding the proposal. Letters of support have been included with the agenda packet.

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