

# APPLICANT'S REPORT

*January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

*Special Use Permit Request  
1005 Chimborazo Boulevard, Richmond, Virginia  
Map Reference Number: E000-0964/003*

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Submitted to: **City of Richmond**  
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Land Use Administration  
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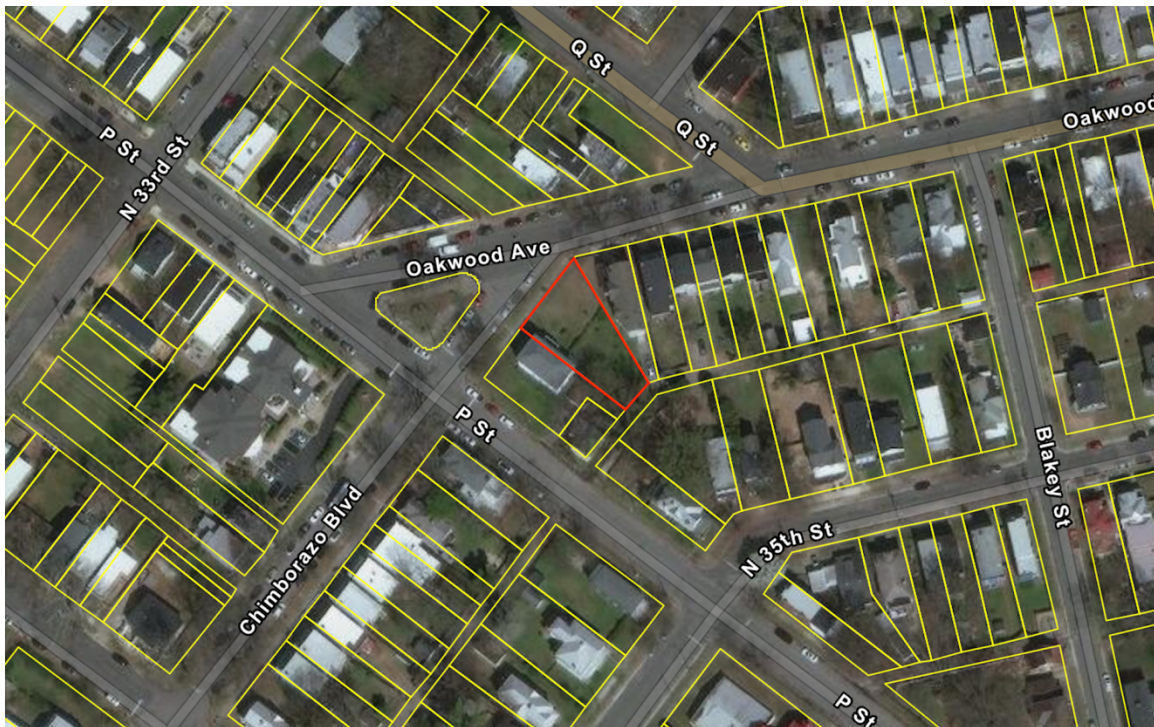
## Introduction

The property owner is requesting a special use permit (the "SUP") for 1005 Chimborazo Boulevard (the "Property"). The SUP would authorize the construction of two (2) single-family attached dwellings. The SUP is required as single-family attached dwellings are not a permitted use in the R-5 Single Family Residential zoning district.

## Existing Conditions

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND EXISTING LAND USE

The Property is located on the east side of Chimborazo Boulevard at its intersection with Oakwood Avenue, and is referenced by the City Assessor as tax parcel E000-0964/003. The Property is an irregularly shaped vacant lot that is roughly 71.5' wide by 132.3' in depth and contains approximately 7,406 square feet of lot area. The lot is relatively flat and is afforded access in the rear by means of an alley running parallel to Chimborazo Blvd. For a more detailed description of the Property, please refer to the survey that is hereinafter attached with the application materials.



The properties to the north, east and south are generally developed with single family detached dwellings, two- to four-family dwellings, or are undeveloped vacant lots. Across Oakwood Avenue from the Property are one- and two-family dwellings, as well as mixed-use and commercial properties. Consequently, the context of the surrounding area is denser—both from a use perspective and a feature perspective—than the current zoning would suggest.

## **EXISTING ZONING**

The Property is zoned R-5 Single-Family Residential, which does not permit the proposed single-family attached dwelling use. The surrounding properties to the south and east are also zoned R-5. Across Chimborazo Blvd is the B-1 Neighborhood Business District, which is a district that permits a variety of residential, commercial, office, and institutional uses.

## **MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION**

The Richmond 300 Master Plan (“the Master Plan”), which was approved by Richmond City Council at their December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, suggests Neighborhood Mixed-Use for the Property. The Master Plan suggests this future land use designation includes areas that are predominately residential with a small percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses. Within this designation, the encouraged primary uses are single-family dwellings, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), and open space. The development style desired is one of a variety of building types that are close to one another and create a unified street wall, while also being respectful of historical development patterns, forms, and densities (p. 56). Furthermore, the immediate vicinity is designated as a “micro node” according to the Nodes Map (figure 10, p. 25). A micro node is an area where there exists opportunity to “help create a unique sense of place within many of Richmond’s historic urban neighborhoods,” (p. 24).

In addition to the Property-specific guidance offered by the Vision and Core Concepts chapter, there are a number of other goals elsewhere within the Master Plan that support this request. In the High-Quality Places chapter, Objective 1.3, “to support the growth of housing in nodes,” is supportive of this request, as it would increase the density in an efficient and respectful manner over that which would be permitted. Objective 1.4, “to maintain and improve primarily residential areas by increasing their linkages to nodes and open space and maintaining high-quality design standards,” (p. 86) would be met by virtue of a building and site design that is thoughtfully tailored to reinforce a relationship with the triangular park and unique street pattern formed by Oakwood Avenue, P Street, and Chimborazo Boulevard. This relationship is further encouraged by the Objective 4.1 of that same chapter, which is to “create and preserve high-quality, distinctive, and well-designed neighborhoods and nodes throughout the City.” Under that objective the master Plan provides additional guidance which is intended to “(e) encourage development that respects and preserves the natural features of the site through sensitive site design, avoidance of substantially altering topography...” and “(f) Ensure that building materials are durable and create a lasting addition to the built environment,” (p. 100). Lastly, the Inclusive Housing chapter, Objective 14.5, to “encourage more housing types throughout the City and greater density...at nodes...” supports this request, as it is a more efficient use of the Property than could be achieved by-right in the R-5 zoning district.

# Proposal

## PURPOSE OF REQUEST

The Property consists of a single lot of record that is irregularly shaped and unusually large for the vicinity. The Property has a lot width of roughly 71.5' fronting Chimborazo Blvd and narrows toward the rear of the lot. The Property contains approximately 7,406 square feet of lot area. The owner would like to construct two single-family attached dwellings on the Property. The R-5 district does not permit single-family attached dwellings, so therefore the SUP is required in order to permit the proposed development.

The Property's lot width and area are larger than other lots in the vicinity, which vary in size but are all characteristically smaller urban lots. A majority of the lots in the subject block face of Chimborazo Boulevard and Oakwood as well as those further to the south and east are substandard in lot and width and area. Similarly, a majority of those lots are developed single-family dwellings, many of which are substandard in terms of feature requirements such as side and front yards. There are also a number of single-family attached and two-family dwellings which are nonconforming with regard to use in addition to be substandard in terms of R-5 feature requirements. As a result, the proposed development, consisting of single-family attached dwellings on two lots, is more consistent with the prevailing lot pattern and dwelling types than by-right development under the R-5 zoning would otherwise permit.

As stated in the previous section, there is a mixture of uses in the general vicinity, none of which would seem to indicate that this proposed development is of atypical intensity. For example, 1015 Oakwood Avenue, according to a zoning confirmation letter written in 2005, establishes that property as a legally non-conforming two-family dwelling, citing its existence to at least 1934. Based on the historic lot pattern, the majority of lots overall, not only on the block face but moreover in this vicinity, are nonconforming with regard to lot area and lot width. In addition, there have been a number of lots authorized by SUP in the greater Church Hill area for similar proposals.

In exchange for the SUP, the intent of this request is to ensure a high-quality market rate infill development. The overall project would be appropriately dense and efficient. At the same time, it would remain respectful to the historic lot pattern in the vicinity thereby remaining consistent with the predominant character of the area. The quality assurances conditioned through the SUP would guarantee a higher quality development than might otherwise be developed by right. The SUP would allow for the sale of the proposed high-quality single-family attached dwellings as home ownership opportunities, thereby addressing multiple objectives of the Master Plan.

## PROJECT DETAILS

The two (2) proposed single-family attached dwellings would be two stories in height and would each contain 2,170 square feet of finished floor area. The dwellings would include 3 bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms and would also be configured in a traditional urban rowhouse design. The units have been staggered, front to back, in order to create architectural variety that responds to the irregular geometry of the neighborhood's development pattern. Furthermore, the elevations of the dwellings "step down" moving north to south toward P Street. This allows the development to respect the existing topography of the site while breaking up the overall mass of the two attached dwellings.

The proposed floor plans include modern and open living spaces. Kitchens are incorporated into the living and dining spaces through the use of island counter arrangements and bar seating. Each unit would include a master bedroom suite on the second floor, complete with en suite master bath and walk-in closet. Second and third bedrooms would also be located on the second floor. A full-width front porch and rear decks are proposed and would provide ample usable outdoor area. Two parking spaces are proposed for the two dwellings, which would be accessed from the alley at the rear of the Property.

## Findings of Fact

The following are factors indicated in Section 17.11 of the Charter and Section 114-1050.1 of the Zoning Ordinance relative to the approval of special use permits by City Council. The proposed special use permit will not:

- ***Be detrimental to the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community involved.***

The proposed special use permit for high-quality infill construction will not impact the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the nearby neighborhoods.

- ***Tend to create congestion in streets, roads, alleys and other public ways and places in the area involved.***

The proposed special use permit will not result in significant traffic impacts to nearby residential neighborhoods. The negligible traffic generation and two off street parking spaces for the two dwelling units will prevent congestion on streets, roads, alleys or any other public right of way.

Furthermore, the Property lies within walking distance to three bus routes with alternating timetables of frequent service: the "12" and "13" routes, which generally connect East End neighborhoods to Downtown and/or the Shockoe Bottom Pulse station, and the "39" route, which connects East End neighborhoods to the neighborhood services located at North 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Nine Mile Road, such as the Market at 25<sup>th</sup> grocery store.

- ***Create hazards from fire, panic or other dangers.***

The property will be developed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the building code and in accordance with the requirements of Fire and Emergency Services. The City's codes applicable to this development are designed to eliminate such hazards.

- ***Tend to overcrowding of land and cause an undue concentration of population.***

The proposed special use permit will not tend to over crowd the land or create an undue concentration of population.

- ***Adversely affect or interfere with public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, water supplies, sewage disposal, transportation or other public requirements, conveniences and improvements.***

The special use permit would not adversely affect the above referenced City services.

- ***Interfere with adequate light and air.***

The light and air available to the subject and adjacent properties will not be affected. The proposed buildings are of compatible massing and spacing to the existing in the vicinity. As a result, this request will not interfere with the provision of adequate light and air to the adjacent buildings.

## Summary

In summary we are enthusiastically seeking approval for the construction of two high-quality single-family attached dwellings. The buildings have been thoughtfully designed in order to provide appropriate, high-quality, market rate, infill development. The request would contribute to the ongoing revitalization of the neighborhood, upgrading the Property while maintaining a desirable variation in housing style and density in the vicinity.

The proposed development would respectfully help bolster a consistent urban fabric in a block face in which there are noticeable “missing teeth.” It would help encourage a pedestrian friendly urban streetscape in the block and contribute to the vibrancy of the block through the addition street life in the form of a street-oriented full width front porch. An appropriate urban form coupled with the provision of accessory parking to the rear of the Property would give the Property the much-desired traditional neighborhood design, which is appropriate to this area of the City. The provision of off-street parking spaces per zoning standards would help mitigate any impact on parking related to the development. Finally, the quality assurances conditioned through the SUP would guarantee a higher quality development than might otherwise be developed by right.