



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-026: To authorize the special use of the property known as 715 Mosby Street for the purpose of a mixed-use building, upon certain terms and conditions, and to repeal Ord. No. 2010-128-172, adopted Oct. 11, 2010, and all amendatory ordinances thereto.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 3, 2026

PETITIONER

Mark Baker - Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

715 Mosby Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize a three-story mixed-use building containing 22 units within an R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. Multifamily buildings are permitted by-right in the R-63 district; however, commercial uses are only permitted on corner lots. As proposed, the request does not comply with certain lot requirements of the underlying zoning district, including minimum lot area. A Special Use Permit is therefore required to authorize this request.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed use aligns with the Master Plan recommendations for Neighborhood Mixed Use land uses and is considered a Secondary Use.

Staff also finds that the mixed-use building supports Master Plan Objective 4.1, well-designed neighborhoods. The scale and orientation of the new residential building and its small commercial use has obtained approval from the City's Commission of Architectural Review. The applicant has provided architectural details that borrow from the prevailing historic, physical characteristics found throughout Union Hill.

Staff finds that the proposed units are located on a designated Major Mixed-Use Street and contains, through design, an improved pedestrian experience, buildings that address the street with parking in the rear, new street trees, and rear entrances for vehicles; all of which are proposed features for creating Major Mixed-Use Streets.

Staff further finds that this portion of Mosby Street is an important connection between Venable Street and the Leigh Street viaduct where Mosby Court South, an important Priority Neighborhood designation within the Richmond 300, is currently being planned for redevelopment. The proposed mixed-uses will provide further pedestrian connections and "eyes on the street" making this portion of Mosby safer for all residents.

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 property is located in the Union Hill neighborhood between Venable and Carrington Streets. The property is currently a 15,364 square feet (.40 acre) vacant parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use is mixed-use building containing 22 multi-family dwellings with first floor commercial. The proposed density of the parcel is 22 units upon .40 acres or 55 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property 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 multi-family buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

Major Mixed-Use Street:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, through commercial and mixed-use areas

- Prioritize use and density-scaled sidewalks and crosswalks
- Require form elements, such as buildings to the street with parking in the rear, as well as building windows and entrances on the street
- Incorporate streetscape features, such as trees, benches, and trash receptacles
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Prioritize the curbside for walking, bicycling, transit, and short-term parking access and loading for local shops and restaurants

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. The following feature requirements of the R- are not met:

Sec. 30-419.2 - Permitted principal uses.

The proposed commercial use is not permitted.

Sec. 30-419.5 – Lot area and width.

Multifamily dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 4,000 square feet in total area and not less than 1,000 square feet in area for each dwelling unit.

The plan, as proposed, would require a lot area of 22,000 square feet. The subject parcel is 15,364 square feet.

If approved, this special use permit would be subject to following special terms and conditions:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a mixed-use building, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans, subject to the applicable regulations of Chapter 30, Article IX, Division 4 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.
- Signs on the Property shall be limited to signs permitted in the R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District, pursuant to section 30-507.1 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- 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 installation of new sidewalk and the installation of two street trees along Mosby Street, substantially as shown on the Plans, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works.

Surrounding Area

Most adjacent and nearby properties are located within the same R-63 zone with a large section of R-53 Multifamily Residential to the West. The area is a mixture of single-family, two-family, multifamily, and equally distributed neighborhood commercial uses.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and the Union Hill Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, staff has not received any letters of support, nor opposition, for this application.

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