



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-028: To authorize the special use of the property known as 103 South Shields Avenue for the purpose of up to two two-family detached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

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

PETITIONER

Mark Baker - Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

103 South Shields Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant is proposing to construct two two-family detached dwellings. The property is currently located within the R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. The proposed dwellings do not meet the current requirements for lot coverage, lot area, lot width, and side-yard width. 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 Community Mixed Use land uses and is considered a Secondary Use. While functioning as two duplexes, the units appear, from the public realm, as a single-family dwelling.

Staff finds that the increase in residential density is appropriate given the proximity to a Major Mixed-Use Street, and the successive string of micro-nodes along this portion of West Cary Street. Both of these designations may attract additional residents and visitors.

Staff also finds that the height and massing are similar to many of the residential buildings in the immediate vicinity. Two-family dwellings and small multi-family uses are a common use within this area of the Fan neighborhood.

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 Fan neighborhood on South Shields Avenue between West Cary Street and Parkwood Avenue. The property is currently a 1,781 square foot (.04 acre) vacant parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use is two two-family detached dwellings. The proposed density of the parcel is 4 units upon .04 acres, or 100 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates these parcels as Community Mixed-Use. This land use is intended to be a "Cluster of medium-density, walkable commercial and residential uses that provide neighborhood services to nearby residential communities and sometimes feature regional attractions."

Development Style: The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary significantly depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Uses may be mixed horizontally in several buildings on a block or vertically within the same building. 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.

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 streets. Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening; shared parking requirements are encouraged.

Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to six stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas, as necessary. New buildings that are taller than historical buildings should step back from the build-to line after matching the height of the predominant cornice line of the block.

Primary Uses: Retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Single-family houses, institutional, 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

The current zoning for this property is R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. The property is also currently subject to a Special Use Permit from 1994, which authorized the subject parcel for six off-street parking spaces for the multifamily building located at 2107 West Cary Street. The proposed dwellings do not meet the following requirements:

Sec. 30-419.8. - Lot coverage.

In the R-63 district, lot coverage for uses other than multifamily dwellings shall not exceed 65 percent of the area of the lot.

The proposed lot coverage is approximately 77 percent.

Sec. 30-419.5(4). - Lot area and width.

Two-family attached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 2,600 square feet in area.

The property is 1,781 square feet in area.

Sec. 30-419.6. - Yards.

There shall be side yards of not less than five feet in width.

The proposed yard width is 3 foot.

Ordinance Conditions

- The special use permit would impose conditions on the property, including:
- Notwithstanding any provision of Ordinance No. 1994-219-209, adopted October 10, 1994, to the contrary, the Special Use of the Property shall be as up to two two-family detached dwellings, 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 shall be 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.
- 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

Currently, the majority of surrounding properties are zoned R-63 with a small area of R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential directly to the south.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, the Fan Area Business Alliance, and the Uptown Association, of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, staff has not received any letters of support, nor opposition, for this application.

Staff Contact: Jonathan Brown, Principal Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5734