



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-097: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3601 Hopkins Road for the purpose of a multifamily development containing up to 172 dwelling units within four residential buildings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 5, 2026

PETITIONER

Megan Nedostup

LOCATION

3601 Hopkins Road

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to allow for a multifamily use within an R-4 Single-Family Residential District. Multifamily uses are not permitted within the R-4 district. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff find that the proposed use, a new 4-story multifamily building with off-street parking, to be aligned with the Neighborhood Mixed-Use land use category as a secondary use.

Staff find that the proposed use is located on Hopkins Road, a designated Major Residential Street. Design elements of Major Residential Streets found within the proposed plan include sidewalk improvements, building orientation, and additional street trees. Staff worked with the applicant on the proposed site design to include a proper street connection, based upon the City's Better Streets Manual, connecting recently completed Broadwick Road and Hopkins Road. The goal of this new connection is to enable increased, safe pedestrian access between neighborhoods and nearby Thomas C Boushall Middle School.

Due to findings summarized above, Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Special Use Permits.

Therefore, staff recommend approval of the request for a Special Use Permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located within the Walmsley neighborhood and situated between Warwick Road and Rusk Avenue. The property is currently vacant, totaling 231,782 (5.3 acres).

Proposed Use

The proposed use is a 4-story, multifamily residential building. The proposed density of the project is 172 units upon 5.3 acres or approximately 32 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's 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 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.

The property also fronts a designated Great Street and Major Residential Street. Major Residential Streets are intended to:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, as well as pedestrians and bicycles, through residential neighborhoods
- Prioritize for creating sidewalks and crosswalks
- Install street trees as a buffer between sidewalk and street
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Ensure low street speed by utilizing traffic calming measures

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this parcel is R-4 Single-Family Residential. The proposed use does not conform to the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance:

Sec. 30-408.1 Permitted Principal Uses

Multifamily buildings are not a permitted use within the R-4 district.

If approved, the special use permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily development containing up to 172 dwelling units within four residential buildings, substantially as shown on the Plans, which development shall include amenity spaces, including those labeled “Clubhouse” and “Amenity Space/Recreational Space,” substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No more than 260 off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No fewer than ten long-term bicycle spaces per residential building shall be provided on the Property.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed four stories. Stories shall be not less than ten feet in height and not greater than 15 feet in height.
- Signs on the Property shall be limited to signs permitted in all districts pursuant to section 30-505 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and signs permitted in the I Institutional District, pursuant to section 30-511 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended. Internally illuminated signs and roof-mounted signs shall not be permitted.
- Brick, brick veneer, stone, stone veneer, masonry, vinyl, fiber cement, and engineered wood shall be permitted building siding materials.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property, including but not limited to transformers, shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- The materials and architectural style of the structure labeled as “Maintenance Building,” substantially as shown on the Plans, shall be of equivalent, or nearly equivalent, quality and character as those of the principal buildings on the Property.
- Street trees and ornamental vegetation shall be installed and maintained on both sides of the proposed street section shown on the Plans connecting Hopkins Road and Broadwick Road. The final number, species, and location of street trees and ornamental vegetation shall be shown on a final landscape plan approved by the City’s Urban Forestry Division in accordance with the most up-to-date version of that Division’s “Approved Species List.” Installation of street trees and ornamental vegetation in accordance with such plan shall occur prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
- 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 adjoining/abutting properties and public streets.

Surrounding Area

The area is primarily single-family residential and institutional uses.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified nearby residents of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, no letters of support or opposition have been received.

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