



August 13, 2026

Members of the Planning Commission
City of Richmond, Virginia
900 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Via email: PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov

Subject: Ordinance No. 2026-187, 1209 Overbrook Road, Tax Parcel No. N000-074/014

I am writing to express the Art Deco Society of Virginia's (ADSVA) support for the preservation in its entirety of the former Richmond Community Hospital (RCH) building located at 1209 Overbrook Road. We understand from the visual renderings attached to the Special Use Permit application that the building will be included in the planned development. We further understand from the letter from Williams Mullen dated December 4, 2024 (amended January 31, 2025) that the building will be renovated by Virginia Union University.

The RCH building holds an important place in Richmond's Black history and carries a fondness by many for the medical facility that cared for their families when others would not. In addition, the building contains Art Deco architectural elements which put the structure in good company among Richmond's inventory of Art Deco buildings, such as the Central National Bank building, Thomas Jefferson High School, and West Hospital. Part of the mission of the ADSVA is to preserve and celebrate the Commonwealth's Art Deco architecture. The International Coalition of Art Deco Societies has also expressed its support for the building's preservation (see attached). It would be a shame to lose yet another piece of Richmond's and Virginia's rich history should developers be allowed to exclude the RCH building in future design amendments.

The ADSVA urges you to ensure that this important piece of Richmond history is preserved for future generations.

Sincerely,

Andy Nishida
President, Art Deco Society of Virginia

Attachment

1209 Overbrook Rd ORD. 2026-187,

From Pam Bozkurt <pambozkurt@gmail.com>

Date Thu 8/13/2026 2:00 PM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

Cc Gibson, Kenya J. - City Council <Kenya.Gibson@rva.gov>

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CAUTION: This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Dear Planning and Development Review / Land Use Administration and Councilwoman Gibson,

I am writing regarding **ORD. 2026-187**, the proposed Special Use Permit for **1209 Overbrook Road**, which would authorize up to 100 multifamily dwelling units on property currently zoned Institutional.

I want to be clear at the outset that I am **not opposed to responsible redevelopment of this property, nor am I opposed to additional housing in our community**. My concern is with granting a significant and lasting land-use entitlement before the residents of the immediately affected neighborhoods have had a meaningful opportunity to review the final proposal and before several important issues appear to have been fully resolved.

I understand that the proposed ordinance incorporates development plans and therefore is not an unrestricted approval. However, an SUP of this nature creates rights that attach to the property and may benefit future owners as well. That makes it especially important that the conditions attached to the approval adequately protect both the surrounding neighborhoods and the long-term interests of the City.

Among my concerns are:

- **Parking:** The proposed development has been described as approximately 96 units, while the ordinance would permit up to 100. Yet the plans

reportedly provide only approximately 46 automobile parking spaces. That would mean roughly **0.48 parking spaces per dwelling**. Before approval, the City should determine how the resulting parking demand will affect Overbrook Road and adjoining residential streets and whether additional parking or a parking-management plan should be required.

- **Traffic and access:** I am particularly concerned about vehicular access from Overbrook Road. This should be evaluated in conjunction with existing traffic conditions, emergency vehicle use of Overbrook Road, pedestrian safety, and the Fall Line Trail. The possibility of locating vehicular access on West Graham Road rather than Overbrook deserves serious consideration.
- **Neighborhood involvement:** Notification of a civic association or discussions with its leadership should not substitute for meaningful consultation with the residents who live immediately around the property and will experience the daily effects of the development. Residents along Overbrook, Graham, DuBois, and the surrounding streets deserve the opportunity to hear directly from the applicant, ask questions, review the current plans, and offer input **before the entitlement is granted**.
- **Tree preservation and landscaping:** The site contains significant mature tree canopy. If preservation of mature trees is intended as part of the project, those protections should be clearly identified and incorporated into the conditions of approval rather than left to future interpretation.
- **Historic Richmond Community Hospital:** I strongly support preservation of this historically significant building. However, there should be absolute clarity regarding what improvements to the hospital property are included in this SUP, what are part of a future phase, and which community benefits being discussed are actually guaranteed as part of this approval.
- **96 units versus 100 units:** If the current development plan calls for 96 dwelling units, I would like to understand why the ordinance grants authorization for up to 100. If 96 is the project being presented to the community, it seems reasonable that the entitlement reflects that number unless there is a specific justification for the additional units.

Most importantly, the proposed ordinance requires the City to determine that this use will not create congestion or adversely affect transportation, public services, or the surrounding area. I believe the Planning Commission should have sufficient evidence to make those findings before, rather than after, recommending approval.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that the Planning Commission **defer action on ORD. 2026-187** until there has been broader neighborhood engagement and the outstanding issues involving parking, traffic, access, pedestrian safety, tree preservation, the historic hospital, and promised community benefits have been addressed.

A deferral is not a rejection of the project. It is an opportunity to make the project better.

The history of this very property demonstrates the value of community involvement. Earlier redevelopment concepts changed significantly following public engagement, including the decision to preserve the historic Richmond Community Hospital. That is evidence that community participation can result in a stronger project for Virginia Union University, the surrounding neighborhoods, and the City of Richmond.

I respectfully ask that the City not approve the entitlement first and address these issues later. **Engage the affected neighborhoods, resolve the outstanding questions, put the commitments into enforceable conditions, and then bring the ordinance forward for approval.**

Thank you for considering my comments. Please include this correspondence in the public record for **ORD. 2026-187** and provide it to the members of the Richmond City Planning Commission.

Sincerely,

Pam Bozkurt
1224 Dubois Avenue
Richmond, VA 23220

Community hospital Redevelopment

From Jessica Tollner Goldberg <jtollner@gmail.com>

Date Thu 8/13/2026 1:57 PM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

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To the City Planning Commission,

Re: Community Hospital Redevelopment (96 units) – Public Hearing Aug 18

I'm asking the Commission to require changes to this project before approval, specifically: preserve more of the existing mature oak canopy, require genuine like-for-like canopy replacement, and increase on-site parking.

Why:

1. Heat island impact from tree loss:

The project removes 15 mature willow oak and white oak trees (~1 acre of canopy) that currently cool the neighborhood. Replacement covers only 1/30th of what's lost, and uses small ornamental species (Japanese Snowbell, Okame Cherry, Glossy Abelia, London Plane Tree) that won't provide comparable shade for decades, if ever.

2. This isn't a novel ask – it's where city policy is already headed:

State law (Va. Code § 15.2-961) already authorizes localities to require 10-30% tree canopy preservation/replacement on development sites, with a companion provision (§ 15.2-961.1) that requires preservation to be the first option, not replacement.

9 other Virginia localities already have canopy minimums in place (Charlottesville, Falls Church, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Arlington, Fairfax, Ashland, Blacksburg).

Richmond doesn't have this ordinance yet, but is actively drafting one right now as part of the zoning code refresh (10-20% canopy requirement by density, tied to the 60%-by-2037 citywide goal), explicitly to address heat islands which the city's own research links to historically redlined neighborhoods like this.

I'm asking the Commission to apply that same standard to this project now, rather than approve a plan that runs counter to the direction city policy is already moving.

3. Parking shortfall

46 spaces for 96 units is well below comparable Diamond District multifamily developments (100+ spaces beyond unit needs). Expect significant overflow parking onto surrounding streets.

Thank you for your consideration.

Community Hospital Redevelopment (96 units) – Public Hearing Aug 18

From Theresa Thompson <tmbthompson@gmail.com>

Date Thu 8/13/2026 11:52 AM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

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46 spaces for 96 units is well below comparable Diamond District multifamily developments (100+

spaces beyond unit needs). Expect significant overflow parking onto surrounding streets.

Thank you for your consideration.

Theresa Thompson

1209 Overbrook Road SUP

From Athena Liangos <athenaliangos@gmail.com>

Date Thu 8/13/2026 11:38 AM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

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To the City Planning Commission,

Re: Community Hospital Redevelopment (96 units) – Public Hearing Aug 18

As a resident of the adjacent neighborhood - I am asking the Commission to require changes to this project before approval, specifically: preserve more of the existing mature oak canopy, require genuine like-for-like canopy replacement, and increase on-site parking.

Why:

1. Heat island impact from tree loss:

The project removes 15 mature willow oak and white oak trees (~1 acre of canopy) that currently cool the neighborhood. Replacement covers only 1/30th of what's lost, and uses small ornamental species (Japanese Snowbell, Okame Cherry, Glossy Abelia, London Plane Tree) that won't provide comparable shade for decades, if ever. I'd also add we as a community should be leaning into the use of native species.

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State law (Va. Code § 15.2-961) already authorizes localities to require 10-30% tree canopy preservation/replacement on development sites, with a companion provision (§ 15.2-961.1) that requires preservation to be the first option, not replacement.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Community Hospital

From Kathy Reid <kreid1304@gmail.com>

Date Thu 8/13/2026 11:16 AM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

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I'm very concerned about the plans to build that ugly apartment building in my neighborhood. I'm now living in my childhood home on DuBois Avenue. This area was originally called Douglass Court. If you don't know the history of this area, I can educate you.

This was originally an all Black middle class neighborhood. It was a close knit community. Almost all of the children who grew up here were college graduates and many had advanced degrees.

We were horrified when the highway built at end of DuBois Avenue. The peace and quiet was destroyed, but this what done to Black neighborhoods.

Please don't do this again.

Kathryn L. Reid

OBJECTION: Community Hospital Redevelopment – Tree Canopy & Parking (Hearing Aug 18)

From matthew preston <preston.matt86@gmail.com>

Date Thu 8/13/2026 8:48 AM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

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To the City Planning Commission,

Re: Community Hospital Redevelopment (96 units) – Public Hearing Aug 18

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Why:

1. Heat island impact from tree loss:

- The project removes 15 mature willow oak and white oak trees (~1 acre of canopy) that currently cool the neighborhood. Replacement covers only 1/30th of what's lost, and uses small ornamental species (Japanese Snowbell, Okame Cherry, Glossy Abelia, London Plane Tree) that won't provide comparable shade for decades, if ever.

2. This isn't a novel ask – it's where city policy is already headed:

- State law ([Va. Code § 15.2-961](#)) already authorizes localities to require 10-30% tree canopy preservation/replacement on development sites, with a companion provision (§ 15.2-961.1) that requires preservation to be the first option, not replacement.
- 9 other Virginia localities already have canopy minimums in place (Charlottesville, Falls Church, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Arlington, Fairfax, Ashland, Blacksburg).
- Richmond doesn't have this ordinance yet, but is actively drafting one right now as part of the zoning code refresh (10-20% canopy requirement by density, tied to the 60%-by-2037 citywide goal), explicitly to address heat islands which the city's own research links to historically redlined neighborhoods like this.
- I'm asking the Commission to apply that same standard to this project now, rather than approve a plan that runs counter to the direction city policy is already moving.

3. Parking shortfall

- 46 spaces for 96 units is well below comparable Diamond District multifamily developments (100+ spaces beyond unit needs). Expect significant overflow parking onto surrounding streets.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matt Preston
Westover Hills Neighborhood

Community Hospital Development

From Rachel Liao <rachelyliao@gmail.com>

Date Wed 8/12/2026 9:31 PM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

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Hello,

As a Richmond resident, I am disturbed to hear that the redevelopment of Community Hospital will include the removal of nearly an acre of mature native oak trees. Even more confounding is the plan to replace these trees with non-native ornamental species. Please have a care for our environment, our air quality, the heat island in the city when considering the destruction of native habitat!

Sincerely,
Rachel Liao

Community Hospital Feedback

From Sarah Pavilack <spavilack@gmail.com>

Date Wed 8/12/2026 9:26 PM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

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Hello,

I am writing in opposition of the redevelopment of the property in the way that there will be a loss of 15 mature willow oak & white oak trees. This is adding to the heat island effect and reduces the already sparse tree canopy in Richmond. Replacing trees of this size cannot be done by just transplanting a new seedling.

Redevelopment needs to be done with the environment in mind and to the benefit of a sustainable future. Please reconsider this project in a way that does not affect the trees.

Sarah Pavilack

Outline of Opposition to Rezoning at Brook and Overbrook

From Jeff Ashworth <ashworthjeff@gmail.com>

Date Tue 8/11/2026 9:31 AM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

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To whom it may concern,

I'm writing regarding the proposed rezoning and development along Overbrook Road. At this point, I oppose the proposal as currently outlined, but there is one change that would go a long way toward earning my support: **the parking lot should be accessible only from W. Graham Road, facing VUU, rather than from Overbrook Road.**

For me, as a resident on Overbrook with a young child, this is the biggest issue with the current plan.

Our neighborhood has previously asked the City to install speed bumps on Overbrook because, despite being a residential street, vehicles routinely travel 35–45 mph. We were told that was not possible because emergency vehicles rely on Overbrook for rapid access across the city.

If Overbrook therefore needs to function as a relatively unobstructed emergency route, adding a parking-lot entrance there seems particularly concerning. Fast-moving through traffic, vehicles slowing or turning into the lot, cars parked along the street, and limited sight lines could create an unnecessary safety hazard.

The proposed amount of parking also seems dramatically insufficient for the scale of the housing being proposed. My understanding is that the project would include 100 residential units but not even half that number of parking spaces. Even allowing for residents who do not own cars, that imbalance seems likely to push a significant amount of vehicle parking onto the surrounding streets.

On Overbrook in particular, that creates another problem. This is not simply a quiet residential street where additional curbside parking would be an inconvenience. It functions as a connector for EMS services and is also a vital artery for the MTAA.

A substantial increase in street parking could narrow sight lines, create additional congestion, and make an already complicated traffic situation worse. These facts give me pause as a father, and I hope the committee can see the bigger picture.

That concern becomes even greater with the planned Fall Line Trail. A driveway crossing the trail would introduce another conflict point between cars, cyclists, and pedestrians on a street that already has traffic-safety challenges.

If the parking lot can instead enter and exit from W. Graham Road — and if the overall parking plan can better account for the number of residential units being proposed — I think the project becomes substantially easier to support.

There are two additional issues I hope Council will address as the proposal moves forward.

First, the property currently has substantial tree coverage, including six large oak trees that are approximately 100 years old. My understanding is that roughly 60% of the site is currently covered by tree canopy. Those mature trees provide shade and cooling that newly planted trees simply won't be able to replicate for decades. I would strongly

encourage the City to require preservation of as many mature trees as possible, with a final canopy commitment equal to or greater than the site's existing coverage, using appropriate Richmond-native species for new plantings.

Second, during community outreach, the developer indicated that neighborhood residents would have access to a gym inside the historic hospital. I would like to know what Council can do to ensure that promise survives beyond the approval process.

Ideally, community access would be incorporated into an enforceable agreement that clearly establishes who qualifies, hours of access, how long the commitment lasts, who is responsible for operating and maintaining the facility, and whether the obligation continues if the property changes ownership or management. If the gym is being presented as a community benefit of this development, residents should be able to rely on more than a verbal promise.

I'm not opposed to responsible development of this property. I would like to see it succeed. But I also think this is the moment to make sure the project is designed in a way that protects neighborhood safety, preserves the mature tree canopy we already have, and delivers the community benefits residents were promised.

Most importantly, I hope Council will push for the parking-lot access to be moved entirely to W. Graham Road and take a closer look at whether the proposed parking capacity is realistic for approximately 90 new residential units. Those changes, more than anything else, would materially change how I view this proposal.

Thank you for considering these concerns.

Best,
Jeff Ashworth

Resident, 1212 Overbrook Road

Fw: Zone change Richmond Community hospital building 1209 Overbrook Rd

From PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

Date Mon 8/10/2026 2:58 PM

To Wilson, Madison E. - PDR <Madison.Wilson@rva.gov>; Trump, Shaianna L. - PDR <Shaianna.Trump2@rva.gov>

From: Lisa B <lisa_annb16@yahoo.com>

Sent: Monday, August 10, 2026 12:27 PM

To: PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

Subject: Zone change Richmond Community hospital building 1209 Overbrook Rd

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"I would be supportive of this project if the parking lot were accessible only from W. Graham Road, facing VUU.

Our community has previously asked the City of Richmond to install speed bumps on Overbrook Road because, despite being a residential street, vehicles routinely travel 35–45 mph. That request was denied because the ambulance authority relies on Overbrook for rapid access across the city. Given that limitation, adding a parking-lot entrance on Overbrook creates a significant safety concern. Fast-moving traffic, vehicles turning into and out of the lot, and cars parked along the street could create dangerous blind spots and increase the risk of accidents.

This concern is even greater with the proposed Fall Line Trail along Overbrook Road. A parking-lot entrance would create an additional conflict point between vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.

I am also concerned about the project's impact on our neighborhood's heat-island effect. The development would remove six large, approximately 100-year-old oak trees, and the property currently has roughly 60% tree-canopy coverage. Mature oaks provide significant shade and cooling that cannot be replaced immediately by newly planted trees. I ask that the project preserve as many mature trees as possible and that the final tree-canopy coverage be equal to or greater than the current 60%, with new plantings consisting of appropriate Richmond-native species.

Finally, the developer promised during community outreach that local residents would have access to a gym inside the historic hospital. What can City Council do to ensure that this commitment is actually fulfilled?

Can community gym access be made a legally binding condition of the project approval, with the agreement clearly defining who is eligible, hours of access, how long the commitment lasts, maintenance and operating responsibilities, and what happens if the property or development changes ownership or management? We would like this commitment documented and enforceable rather than remaining a verbal promise made during the outreach process.

Overall, we support responsible development, but we want the project designed in a way that protects neighborhood safety, preserves our tree canopy, reduces heat-island impacts, and delivers the community benefits residents were promised."

It's only providing 46 parking spots for the 96 units and their guests, where other projects on hermitage provide an extra 100 spots, therefore we expect lots of congestion on our street, just like at hardywood.

I live directly across from the site and we park 2 cars across the street in front of our house. We only have room for one car in our back alley. I prefer to park in the front. If insufficient parking is available for apartment residents, I fear the entire block on both sides of the road will be packed with cars.

Lisa Burge
1234 Overbrook Road

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

Re: 1209 Overbrook Road

From Jeff Einhaus <jeff.einhaus@richmond.edu>

Date Thu 8/6/2026 2:52 PM

To PDR Land Use Admin <dcdLandUseAdm@rva.gov>

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Hello, I'm writing to express my opposition to the proposal below:

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1209 Overbrook Road for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 100 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

I live on DuBois Avenue and this would add unsustainable density to an area without the proper traffic or safety infrastructure. We already have people flying down our quiet street to avoid congestion on Overbrook. This is a historic neighborhood with generational residents and families with young children. I've spoken to many of my neighbors who also oppose this special use.

Thank you,
Jeff Einhaus

Sent from my iPhone



28 April, 2024

Dr. Hakim Lucas,
President, Virginia Union University,
1500 N. Lombardy Street,
Richmond, **Virginia 23220 USA**

Dear Sir,

We are writing to you to express our support for the preservation of the Richmond Community Hospital (RCH), 1209 Overbrook Road, Richmond, VA, USA a ground plus one building built in 1932. We understand that the plot is proposed to be redeveloped and the historic structure is likely to be demolished.

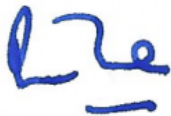
The hospital was founded by Sarah Garland Boyd Jones (1866-1905) who was the first black person and woman to pass the State Medical exam. Richmond Community Hospital was a primary medical facility for Black residents when such services were segregated. Dr. Jones was one of just three female physicians in the city. White hospitals practiced segregation as late as 1950 making the RCH of exceptional historic significance as a landmark for African American Heritage.

While we are sure that the Virginia Union University (VUU) has given adequate thought to all the considerations that necessitate redevelopment, we strongly urge that the plans be reconsidered in a manner that integrates the RCH as a historic landmark property rather than face demolition. Such action would permanently erase an historic Black landmark.

Given VUU's commitment and support to the Black History Museum and VUU's center for African American Culture & History any action to demolish RCH would negate the outstanding work previously carried out by VUU in acknowledging and supporting the preservation of Black History.

The International Coalition of Art Deco Societies (ICADS) would be grateful if this representation could be taken on record and given due consideration.

For **International Coalition of Art Deco Societies**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'L. Davis' or similar, with a horizontal line underneath.

Chair, Preservation Committee

Copy to:

Mr. Tawan Davis,
Founder/CEO
The Steinbridge Group,
1270 Ave of the Americas, 7th Floor,
STE 1068, New York, **New York 10020, USA**
tawan@steinbridge.com

Mr. Levar Stoney,
Mayor, City of Richmond,
Virginia, 900 E. Broad Street, Suite 201
Richmond, **Virginia 23219 USA**
rvamayor@rva.gov

www.icadsartdeco.org Email: Contact@ICADSArtDeco.org