



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-043: To amend and reordain Ord. No. 2024-116, adopted May 13, 2024, which authorized the special use of the property known as 1515 Chamberlayne Parkway for the purpose of a mixed-use building containing up to 91 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions, to modify the plans and the terms and conditions.

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

PETITIONER

Theresa DeBoer

LOCATION

1515 Chamberlayne Parkway

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting an amendment to a Special Use Permit that previously authorized a 5-story, 91-unit, mixed-use building with 91 off street parking spaces in the M-1 Light Industrial Zoning District. The proposed amendment will authorize an 8-story, 150-unit mixed-use building, with 86 off-street parking spaces. A Special Use Permit Amendment is therefore required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed use, which is to include a new, 8-story mixed-use building including residential units, street fronting commercial with outdoor dining space, and off-street parking, to be well aligned with the goals for the Industrial Mixed-Use land use category within the Richmond 300 Master Plan. Characteristics found within the application which align with Industrial Mixed-Use include buildings with street-oriented facades, ground-floor uses interacting with street, rear off-street entrances to parking, medium to high-density buildings, and primary uses.

Staff also finds that the request is supported by Objectives 15.1a and 15.1f, which calls to “Increase the number of Richmonders living in a development pattern that encourages density and reduces dependency on single-occupancy vehicles” and “Increase use of mass and active transportation options,” respectively. (p. 159) The proposed is strategically located on a designated GRTC “high-frequency” route and the recently chosen route for an additional bus rapid transit (Pulse) system expansion.

Staff further finds that the proposal would increase the very much needed walkable destinations for future and current residents. The City’s Walk Score Map scores this area as between 50 to 69, “somewhat walkable”. This proposal’s location, public right-of-way improvements, and mix of uses along Chamberlayne Parkway will help to improve this score. (p.113)

Staff finds that due to all findings summarized above, the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, continue to be met.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit Amendment request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Chamberlayne Industrial Center neighborhood, between West Fritz and West Bacon Streets. The property is currently improved with two buildings with a combined 27,225 sq. ft. of commercial space, constructed in 1950, situated on a 35,352 sq. ft. (.81 acres) parcel of land.

Proposed Use

Mixed-use building with 150 residential units, 86 off-street parking spaces, and 1,280 square feet of commercial space. The proposed density of the project is 91 units upon 0.81 acres or approximately 112 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Industrial Mixed-Use which is defined as "Formerly traditional industrial areas that are transitioning to mixed-use because of their proximity to growing neighborhoods and changes in market conditions. These areas may still retain some light industrial uses."

Development Style: A mix of building types with low-scale, post-industrial buildings that are adapted for a new use are adjacent to new taller residential and/or office buildings. These areas allow "maker uses" to continue while encouraging more individuals to live, work, and play in the area. Buildings should have street-oriented façades with windows and door openings along street frontages. New light industrial uses are compatible with residential, and office uses and are attractively buffered. New 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. Active commercial ground floor are required on street-oriented commercial frontages.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveway entrances are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages and minimal driveway entrances are allowed on secondary streets. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys where possible. Loading for trucks must be provided off-street. Parking lots and parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.

Intensity: Medium- to high-density, three to eight stories.

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

Secondary Uses: Institutional and government. (p. 62)

The property is also fronting a designated Great Street and Major Mixed-Use Street. Major Mixed-Use Streets are intended to:

- 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 (p. 72)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this parcel is M-1 Light Industrial District. The proposed use does not conform to the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance:

Sec. 30-452.1 - concerning permitted principal and accessory uses.
Residential uses are not permitted within the M-1 zone.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a mixed-use building containing up to [94] 150 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans. The [~~areas~~] area on the Plans labeled [~~“tenant”~~] “retail 1” shall be permitted to contain non-dwelling permitted principal and accessory uses in the TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal District, pursuant to section 30-457.2 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.
- No more than [94] 86 off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use.
- No fewer than 15 long-term resident bicycle parking spaces shall be provided on the Property.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed five stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All elevations and site improvements, including landscaping, 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.
- 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 TOD-1 Transit-Oriented Nodal District, pursuant to section 30-518.4 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended. Internally illuminated signs and roof-mounted signs shall not be permitted.
- 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 no fewer than six street trees along West Fritz 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

The area is primarily commercial uses along Chamberlayne Parkway with mixed-residential densities and types to the east and light industrial and institutional uses to the west. The property is approximately ½ mile walking distance to Virginia Union University.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified local residents, the Chamberlayne Industrial Center Association, and the Edgehill Chamberlayne Court Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, no letters of support or opposition have been received.

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