

# APPLICANT'S REPORT

*January 13th, 2021*

*Special Use Permit Request*

*3114 Groveland Avenue, 3119 Veranda Avenue, Richmond, Virginia*

*Map Reference Numbers: N000-1054-010, N000-1054-028*

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Submitted to:

**City of Richmond**

Department of Planning and Development Review

Land Use Administration

900 East Broad Street, Suite 511

Richmond, Virginia 23219

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## Introduction

The applicant is requesting a special use permit (the "SUP") for the properties known as 3114 Groveland Avenue and 3119 Veranda Avenue (the "Property"). The SUP would authorize the construction of three (3) single-family detached dwellings. While that use is permitted in the underlying R-5 Single Family Residential zoning district, a number of the applicable feature requirements cannot be met. Therefore, the SUP is required.

## Existing Conditions

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND EXISTING LAND USE

The Property is an assemblage of two parcels. The first parcel, 3114 Groveland Avenue, is a "through lot" that shares frontage on Groveland and Veranda Avenues between their intersections with Craigie Avenue and Highland View Avenue. It is referenced by the City Assessor with a tax parcel number of N000-1054/010, is 30 feet in width and 138 feet in depth, and is currently unimproved. The second parcel, 3119 Veranda Avenue, is a legal lot of record that fronts onto Veranda Avenue. It is referenced by the City Assessor with a tax parcel number of N000-1054/028, is 30 feet in width and 138 feet, and is also unimproved. According to its deed history, the 3114 Groveland Avenue parcel is itself comprised of two original subdivision lots, being Lots 184 and 260 of the original Highland Terrace subdivision ("the Subdivision") from the early 1900s. These lots were configured back-to-back, with one fronting on Groveland Avenue and the other fronting on Veranda Avenue. The lots were each 30 feet in width and 68 feet and 70 feet in depth. The 3119 Veranda Avenue parcel is also an original Subdivision lot, being lot 261. For a general depiction of the Property, please reference Figure 1 (below) as well as the surveys attached hereto. Figure 1 below shows the 3114 Groveland Avenue parcel in green and the 3119 Veranda Avenue parcel in blue.



Figure 1.

The lot pattern in the vicinity includes through lots as well as lots fronting on either Groveland or Veranda Avenues according to the Subdivision. The lots in the block are either vacant or occupied by single-family dwellings, with the exception of two two-family dwellings at northern end of Veranda Avenue. A number of vacant lots are configured similarly to what is proposed for the Property and are buildable by right according to their deed history. Moving towards the nearby corridors of Brookland Park Boulevard to the south and Meadowbridge Road to the east, there are a variety of residential densities. These commercial corridors themselves are both within walking distance and include a variety of commercial, residential, office, mixed-use and institutional uses.

## **EXISTING ZONING**

The Property and the surrounding properties are zoned R-5 Single-Family Residential, which permits single-family detached dwellings. The majority of properties in the immediate vicinity do not conform to the R-5 feature requirements such as lot area, lot width, and setbacks. In many cases, properties in the vicinity also do not meet the use requirements, that are applicable to this district, as demonstrated by the two-family dwelling in the block.

## **MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION**

The Richmond 300 Master Plan (the "Master Plan"), which was approved by Richmond City Council at their December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, suggests "Residential" for the Property. The Master Plan suggests this future land use designation allow for a variety of housing types that are consistent with the scale, density, and design of what exists in the vicinity. This designation also encourages that developments reinforce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Single-dwellings are the contemplated primary use in the Residential future land use designation (p. 54).

In addition to the Property-specific guidance offered by the Vision and Core Concepts chapter, there are a number of other goals elsewhere within the Master Plan that support this request, especially when considering its adjacency to the Six Points Neighborhood Node as delineated in the Master Plan. In the High-Quality Places chapter, Objective 1.3, "to support the growth of housing in nodes," is supportive of this request, as it would increase the density in an efficient and respectful manner over that which would be permitted by-right. Objective 4.1 of that same chapter, which is to "create and preserve high-quality, distinctive, and well-designed neighborhoods and nodes throughout the City," is respected by this request as it seeks to validate, not dismiss, the unique development pattern found in the Highland Terrace neighborhood. Lastly, the Inclusive Housing chapter, Objective 14.5, to "encourage more housing types throughout the City and greater density...at nodes..." supports this request, as it is a more efficient use of the Property than could be achieved by-right in the R-5 zoning district.

# **Proposal**

## **PURPOSE OF REQUEST**

The SUP would permit the division of the 3114 Groveland Avenue parcel into two lots and the construction of two single-family dwellings. One lot and dwelling would front onto Veranda Avenue (3117), and the other lot and dwelling would front onto Groveland Avenue (3114). The lot fronting onto Groveland Avenue (3114) would be 30 feet in width and 70 feet in depth and

would include 2,100 square feet in lot area. The lot fronting onto Veranda Avenue (3117) would be 30 feet in width and 68 feet in depth, and would be 2,040 square feet in area. As a result, the R-5 Single Family Residential District lot width and lot area requirements would not be met. While this configuration is consistent with the Subdivision layout, the deed and zoning history applicable to this parcel make the SUP the required process to restore this configuration.

The SUP would also address R-5 front yard setback requirement for the two proposed dwellings that would front onto Veranda Avenue. The proposed front yard of 15 feet would better reflect the surrounding development context and would maximize usable open space at the rear of the proposed dwellings. The 3119 Veranda Avenue parcel is actually a buildable lot for the purposes of a single-family detached dwelling. This request would only authorize a reduction in the front yard requirement for that parcel in order to align the two proposed dwellings on Veranda. All other feature requirements in the R-5 District that are applicable to the Property would be met, including the 5-foot rear- and side-yard setback requirements, and the 35% maximum lot coverage requirement.

Finally, the SUP would provide relief from required parking. Under normal zoning, one (1) off-street parking space would be required for each dwelling. In areas where public alley access is not available, particularly those areas that are also of a dense urban character, it is undesirable to provide off street parking accessed by driveways from the street. This is contrary to VisionZero and other planning guidance. For this reason, the zoning ordinance does not require off street parking on lots that are 35 feet or less in width and which do not have alley access. 3119 Veranda, which is technically a buildable, legal lot of record, would not be required to provide parking for this reason. Similarly, had the two parcels that comprise 3114 Groveland not been consolidated they would be treated the same. The SUP proposes on street parking in order to satisfy parking. Because there are no curbs or sidewalks along Veranda Avenue, the right-of-way would be improved with parallel parking adjacent to the existing pavement. This would serve as on-street parking, in front of the dwellings, where none currently exists. Where the dwelling fronting Groveland is concerned, existing on-street parking spaces would be utilized. In both cases, the use of on street parking is consistent with the way in which the current residents along the street satisfy their parking needs.

## **PROJECT DETAILS/DESIGN**

The proposed dwellings would each be approximately twenty feet in width, 34 feet in depth, and two stories in height. They would include approximately 1,360 square feet of finished floor area and consist of three bedrooms and two-and-one-half bathrooms. The dwellings would be of a traditional urban design that is consistent with the architectural character found in the Highland Terrace neighborhood. The proposed floor plans are modern and efficient, and designed to be meet the needs of the market. The floor plans include master bedrooms with en-suite master bathrooms and walk-in closets. Full-width front porches are also proposed for each dwelling.

## **Findings of Fact**

The following are factors included in Section 17.11 of the Charter and Section 30-1050.1 of the Zoning Ordinance relative to the approval of special use permits by City Council. The proposed special use permit will not:

- ***Be detrimental to the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community involved.***

The proposed SUP will not impact the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the nearby neighborhoods. The proposed site improvements and density are consistent with the existing development in the vicinity. This request would simply permit the efficient utilization of the Property by allowing for new development to occur in a manner that is both of quality as well as consistent with the Subdivision. The improvement of the Property in conjunction with the high quality/benefits provided by the SUP will provide positive impacts in terms of health, welfare, etc., and furthermore will add to the vibrancy of the neighborhood.

- ***Tend to create congestion in streets, roads, alleys and other public ways and places in the area involved.***

The proposed SUP will not result in significant traffic impacts to nearby residential neighborhoods. The traffic generation for three dwelling units will be negligible, especially within the context of a walkable neighborhood. In addition, the Property lies within a ten-minute walk to three different bus corridors, two of which (the "2" routes along North Avenue and the "3" routes along Meadowbridge Road) offer high-frequency 15-minute service and one of which (the "20" orbital route along Brookland Park Boulevard) offers a 30-minute frequency. Because of that, the Property is within a 30-minute bus commute to Downtown, Manchester, VCU, Scott's Addition, the Fan, the Museum District, and Carytown. As such, the SUP will not create congestion on streets, roads, alleys or any other public right of way.

- ***Create hazards from fire, panic or other dangers.***

The Property will be developed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the building code and in accordance with the requirements of Fire and Emergency Services. The City's codes applicable to this development are designed to eliminate such hazards.

- ***Tend to overcrowding of land and cause an undue concentration of population.***

The SUP will not tend to overcrowd the land or create an undue concentration of population. The request is reflective of the anticipated use of the Property for three dwelling units based on the original subdivision.

- ***Adversely affect or interfere with public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, water supplies, sewage disposal, transportation or other public requirements, conveniences and improvements.***

The SUP would not adversely affect the above referenced City services. To the contrary, the proposal would provide positive fiscal (tax) benefits that would enhance the City's ability to provide these services to the proposed development.

- ***Interfere with adequate light and air.***

The light and air available to the subject and adjacent properties will not be affected. The massing of the proposed structures is similar to what the underlying zoning district and

feature regulations applicable to single-family detached dwellings allow for by-right. As it relates to adjacent properties, normal side yard setbacks would be met.

## **Summary**

In summary we are enthusiastically seeking approval for the construction of three single-family detached dwellings on the Property. The SUP represents an ideal, small-scale urban infill development for this location that is mindful of its surroundings. In exchange for the SUP, the quality assurances conditioned therein would guarantee the construction of three quality homeownership opportunities consistent with Master Plan guidance.