



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2024-119: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3704 Lawson Street for the purpose of up to four two-family detached dwellings which may contain permanent supportive housing uses, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 7, 2024

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

1401 Hull Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for the purpose four, two-family detached, permanent supportive housing dwellings within an R-5 Single-Family Residential Zoning District. The proposed use is not currently permitted by section 30-410.1, concerning Permitted principal and accessory uses, of the Code of the City of Richmond, 2023. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed use of a two-family detached dwellings are aligned with the goals of the Community Mixed Use land use category including the proposed height of two stories, office use of the ground floor, rear parking, and buildings that address the street with front porches and balconies.

Staff also finds that the proposed is also one-block from the Southside Plaza Priority Growth Node which are areas "...where the City is encouraging the most significant growth in population and development over the next 20 years." The vision for the "...Southside Plaza Area is the bustling center of South Richmond, offering employment, housing, recreation, and entertainment in a walkable human-scale environment."

Staff also finds that the proposed is supported by Objectives 15.1a and 15.1f which state, "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 located near an active commercial street on a GRTC Red, high frequency bus route.

Staff further finds that the proposed permanent supportive housing use is supported by Objective 14.2a "Create a minimum of 300 units of permanent supportive housing to house persons with special needs by 2024 in partnership with Virginia Supportive Housing and other local housing organizations." As noted in the Applicant's Report, the proposed includes 8 units that will be used as permanent supportive housing from Serenity Counseling Services of Virginia, a licensed mental and behavioral health provider in the State of Virginia. (p. 151)

Staff finds that with the ordinance conditions the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, are met. 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 properties are located in the Swansboro West neighborhood, between East 37th Street and Southside Plaza. The property is currently a 6,969 sq. ft., .16-acre, unimproved parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

four two-family detached dwellings that are to include the use of permanent supportive housing.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Community Mixed Use, which is defined as 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.

The density of the proposed development, overall, is approximately 60 units upon .24 acres equaling 250 units per acre.

The proposed is also near the Southside Plaza Priority Growth Node. These Nodes are defined as centers "...with significant cultural, entertainment, government, and business destinations as well as shopping, housing, and unique place-based attractions." (p. 24)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The property is located within the R-5 Single-Family Residential District. The proposed use does not conform to the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance:

Sec. 30-410.1: Permitted principal uses

Any principal use permitted in the R-1 district as set forth in Section 30-402.1 shall be permitted in the R-5 Single-Family Residential District.

The proposed two-family dwellings are not a permitted use.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to four two-family detached dwellings which may contain permanent supportive housing uses, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No fewer than four on-site parking spaces shall be required for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed two stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- Subject to the provisions of Chapter 30, Article VI, Division 15 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, all required supplemental materials that pertain to the permanent supportive housing uses shall be submitted at the time of application for a certificate of zoning compliance.
- 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 new street trees along Lawson Street and East 37th 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 residential with primarily commercial uses to the southeast along Hull Street. Some institutional uses are also present in the vicinity. Single-family detached dwellings are the primary use within the Swansboro West neighborhood.

Affordability

Median Family Income Richmond region = \$109,400 per year. *

Affordability threshold = 30% of household income towards housing costs.

= \$32,820 per year

= \$2,735 per month

The proposed units are intended as permanent supportive housing.

*(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023)

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified nearby residents and the Swansboro West - Hull Street/Midlothian Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, staff has received a message that the association has decided not to take a position, for or against, the proposed application.

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