



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review ***Staff Report***

Ord. No. 2025-214 To authorize the conditional use of the property known as 1407 East Cary Street for the purpose of a nightclub, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: October 7, 2025

PETITIONER

Adrienne Londono

LOCATION

1407 East Cary Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to authorize a nightclub to extend the hours permitted for liquor sales and occasional DJ'd events, specifically on Fridays and Saturdays. The proposed entertainment activities, hours of operation, and alcohol sales past 12:00 a.m. (midnight) are considered, by the Zoning Ordinance, to be nightclub activities. The property is zoned B-5 Central Business District. This use is only permitted by a Conditional Use Permit in this district.

The proposed nightclub operations are detailed in the Applicant's Report.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposal is permitted in the B-5 District by a conditional use permit.

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Destination Mixed-Use. Staff has reviewed the application and finds the proposal is generally consistent with the designation, which supports retail as a primary use, and a mix of complementary uses in this district. Staff find the master plan supports the proposed nightclub use, which is considered complementary to a dense urban environment.

Staff finds that the subject property is also located within the Downtown Core Priority Growth Node, which is described as "the backbone of the local, state, and federal government in Richmond as well as a financial, insurance, biotech, and healthcare center," and is envisioned to transition into "an 18-hour district (18 hours of the day are lively and 6 are sleepy) with a mix of uses, including entertainment, residential, and retail uses."

Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Conditional Use Permits. 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 Conditional Use Permit request, provided a provision is added limiting the validity of the permit to one year.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Shockoe Slip neighborhood. The property is currently a 4,356 square ft parcel of land, on the southern side of East Cary Street, between South 14th Street and South 15th Street.

Master Plan

The Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the future land use of the subject property as Destination Mixed-Use, which is defined as, “key gateways featuring prominent destinations, such as retail, sports venues, and large employers, as well as housing and open space, located at the convergence of several modes of transportation, including Pulse BRT or other planned transit improvements.”

Development Style: Higher density, transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites. New development should be urban in form, may be of larger scale than existing context, and, where relevant, should pay special attention to the historic character of the existing context. Development should enhance the public realm and create a sense of place. Many buildings are vertically mixed-use. 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 uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages.

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 street frontages. Surface parking is prohibited as a principal use; when surface parking is provided as an accessory use, it should be located to the rear of buildings and screened. Parking requirements are reduced to allow more market-based parking strategies, including shared parking.

Intensity: Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories.

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

Secondary Uses: Institutional and government.

The subject property is also located within the Downtown Core Priority Growth Node, which is described as “the backbone of the local, state, and federal government in Richmond as well as a financial, insurance, biotech, and healthcare center,” and is envisioned to transition into “an 18-hour district (18 hours of the day are lively and 6 are sleepy) with a mix of uses, including entertainment, residential, and retail uses.”

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is within the B-5 Central Business zoning district.

- Pursuant to section 30-442.1:1 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, the Conditional Use of the Property shall be as a nightclub, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- Operation of the Conditional Use permit shall be conducted strictly in accordance with the document entitled “Management Plan for 1407 E. Cary Street, Richmond, VA 23219,”

prepared by Adrienne Londono, and dated June 12, 2025, a copy of which is attached to and made part of this ordinance.

- The hours of operation for the Conditional Use shall be from 12:00 midnight until 2:00 a.m., Friday and Saturday. The Conditional Use shall not operate between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. daily.
- Patron queuing on exterior of building shall only be permitted directly adjacent to the building wall and without any improvements, temporary or otherwise, unless said improvements are approved according to the applicable provisions of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and all future amendments to such laws.
- Operation of the Conditional Use does not constitute an exemption to providing sound control; the nightclub use shall be conducted strictly in accordance with Chapter 11, Article II of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding area is predominately office, commercial, and retail uses, with several surface parking lots in the vicinity.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Shockoe Partnership, area residents and property owners. Staff has received both support and opposition from the public.

Staff Contact: Madison Wilson, Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-7436