



## CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2022-026:** To authorize the special use of the property known as 2117 Fairfax Avenue for the purpose of two two-family detached dwellings and one single-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

---

**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** February 22, 2022

---

#### **PETITIONER**

Mark Baker, Baker Development Resources

#### **LOCATION**

2117 Fairfax Avenue

#### **PURPOSE**

To authorize the special use of the property known as 2117 Fairfax Avenue for the purpose of two two-family detached dwellings and one single-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The applicant is requesting to subdivide the existing single lot, which is improved with a two-family dwelling, into three lots in order to construct one new two-family detached dwelling and one new single-family detached dwelling on the two new lots. The existing two-family dwelling is proposed to be retained. The proposed two-family dwelling is not a permitted use in the R-5 Single-family Residential District. The three proposed lots do not meet the lot area and lot width requirements of the R-5 Single-family Residential District. Off street parking, yard, and height requirements would be met with the proposal.

Staff finds that the proposed single- and two-family dwellings are consistent with the recommendations of Richmond 300. The property has a land use designation of Residential. Single-family dwellings are a primary use recommended by the Residential land use category, and two-family dwellings are a secondary use recommended by the Residential land use category. The property is located approximately one-tenth of a mile from Richmond Highway which is designated for future enhanced transit in Richmond 300. Objective 6.1 of Richmond 300 is to “increase the number of residents and jobs at Nodes and along enhanced transit corridors in a land development pattern that prioritizes multi-modal transportation options,” and action strategy (b) under this objective is to “develop housing at all income levels in and near Nodes and along major corridors.”

Staff finds that the proposed two-family dwelling nearest Richmond Highway and the new single-family dwelling being added on the neighborhood side help bring additional density to support future rapid transit in the area.

The two-family dwelling contains only one exterior door to appear from the street as a single-family dwelling, and both new buildings feature full-length covered front porches and rear covered porches. The predominant exterior finish for both new buildings would be fiber-cement siding, with brick piers supporting the front porch.

Staff finds the proposed special use would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the provision of on-site parking.

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.

---

---

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The subject property contains a lot area of approximately 14,157 square feet and is improved with a two story two-family detached dwelling. The R-5 District does not permit two-family dwellings. The existing two-family dwelling is legally nonconforming (“grandfathered”). The property is located within the Oak Grove neighborhood.

### **Proposed Use of the Property**

The proposed Special Use Permit would allow for an additional two-family dwelling to be located on the eastern portion of the property, on a newly created lot. The proposed density is approximately 15 units per acre.

### **Master Plan**

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property as Residential. This land use category is described as a neighborhood consisting primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature.

**Development Style:** Houses on medium-sized and large-sized lots in a largely auto-dependent environment. Homes are setback from the street. Future developments continue and/or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Future single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family residential buildings are built to a scale and design that is consistent with existing buildings.

**Mobility:** Bicycle and pedestrian access are prioritized and accommodated. Low residential density means that it is not possible to provide frequent transit within these areas; however, frequent transit may be found at the edges of these areas within more intense future land use

designations. Many homes have driveways and/or garages, which are located off an alley behind the home if an alley is present.

Intensity: Buildings are generally one to three stories. Lot sizes generally range from one to three stories. Lot sizes generally range up to 5,000 to 20,000+ square feet. General residential density of 2 to 10 housing units per acre.

Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Duplexes and small multi-family buildings, institutional, and cultural. Secondary uses may be found along major streets.

The property is located one-tenth of a mile from a high frequency (every 15 minutes on weekdays and Saturdays) GRTC bus line. The predominant land use in the vicinity is single-family dwellings, however there are two other two-family detached dwellings located within the block of the subject property.

### **Zoning and Ordinance Conditions**

The subject property is located within the R-5 Single-Family Residential District. The R-5 district does not permit two-family dwellings. If adopted, the Special Use Permit would impose the following conditions on the properties:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as two two-family detached dwellings and one single-family detached dwelling, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) A minimum of two off-street parking spaces shall be provided for each two-family detached dwelling and one off-street parking space shall be provided for the single-family detached dwelling.
- (c) All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (d) Prior to the issuance of any certificate of occupancy for the Special Use, the subdivision of three residential lots, substantially as shown on the Plans, shall be accomplished by obtaining the necessary approvals from the City and recording the appropriate plats and deeds among the land records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond.

### **Affordability**

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$68,529 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$20,559 per year, or \$1,713 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden. The developer intends to lease the units at market rate, but has not yet determined what the rents will be.

*\*(U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)*

*\*\*Based upon VHDA fixed-rate, 30-year mortgage, with 20% down and 4% interest*

**Surrounding Area**

The predominant land use in the vicinity is single-family dwellings, however there are two other two-family detached dwellings located within the block of the subject property.

**Neighborhood Participation**

Staff notified area residents and property owners, as well as the Oak Grove Civic Association. Staff has not received any letters of support or opposition.

**Staff Contact:** Richard Saunders Senior Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5648