



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-119: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1710 Mactavish Avenue for the purpose of a motor vehicle sales, rental, and service facility, upon certain terms and conditions. (2nd District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: June 2, 2026

PETITIONER

Matt Benoist

LOCATION

1710 Mactavish Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant proposes to operate an electric vehicle dealership within an existing commercial structure. The dealership will primarily conduct online sales with minimal foot traffic. Motor vehicle dealerships are not a permitted use in the B-7 Mixed-Use Business District. A Special Use Permit is therefore requested to operate this business.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed use is consistent with the Master Plan recommendations for Industrial Mixed Use. The proposal involves the adaptive reuse of an existing commercial structure and is expected to generate impacts on the surrounding area comparable to those of an office use, which is identified as an appropriate primary use within this land use category.

Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Special 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 recommend approval of the Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The .397-acre property located on the northwest corner of MacTavish Avenue and Rockbridge Street in the Scott's Addition neighborhood. The property is improved with a zero-lot line industrial structure encompassing nearly the entire parcel.

Proposed Use of Property

Motor vehicle sales, rental, and service facility.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the 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 uses 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.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for the property is B-7 Mixed-Use Business District. The following features of the proposed development do not comply with the current zoning regulations:

Sec. 30-446.2. - Permitted principal and accessory uses.
Auto sales are not a permitted use in the district.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a motor vehicle sales, rental, and service facility, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment, including heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units, serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any adjoining public right-of-way.

Surrounding Area

Adjacent properties are within the same B-7 Mixed-Use Business District. The area is primarily light industrial and some residential.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Greater Scott's Addition Civic Association and all property owners within 150 feet of the property. To date no communication from the public regarding the proposal has been received.

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