
Concerns about Special Use Permit Request at 1215 North 29th Street

From Joey Orton <ortonjoey@gmail.com>

Date Thu 4/2/2026 2:59 PM

To Trump, Shaianna L. - PDR <Shaianna.Trump2@rva.gov>

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Hello Shaianna,

These are my concerns I would like read at the zoning meeting over the proposed rezoning ORDINANCE No. 2026-073 the property 1215 N 29th Street.

My name is Joseph Orton, and I am a property owner at 1217 N. 29th st, directly adjacent to the subject parcel at 1215 N. 29th Street. I am writing in opposition to the proposed rezoning of this lot to permit the construction of two abutting duplex structures, and I respectfully urge the Commission to deny this application as submitted.

The block of N. 29th Street where this lot sits has developed over time as a cohesive streetscape of single-family homes. While new construction has occurred, it has consistently been in keeping with the scale and form of the surrounding residences. The proposed development — two separate structures placed back to back on a lot approximately 30 feet wide — would represent a significant departure from that established pattern. The massing and density of this proposal is simply not in character with the surrounding built environment.

One of the defining qualities of this block is its open rear yard corridor, which has allowed neighbors to maintain relationships, share garden space, and enjoy natural light across property lines. Every neighboring household participates in backyard gardening. Placing two abutting buildings on this narrow lot would introduce a looming wall structure along that corridor, eliminating the light neighbors depend on for gardening and severing the community. This has a direct impact on the livability and enjoyment of adjacent private property.

Parking is perhaps the most concrete and quantifiable concern. Street parking on this block is already at or near capacity, a condition that has worsened as nearby larger developments have been completed. Properties on this street and the surrounding alley rely heavily on rear yard access via the alley for off-street parking. The proposed site layout does not appear to accommodate any off-street parking for the new units, which would place the parking burden of additional residential units entirely onto an already-strained public street. I would ask the Commission to confirm whether this proposal meets Richmond's off-street parking requirements for multi-family development, and if a variance is being sought, to weigh the significant impact on the surrounding block.

I am not opposed to the responsible development of this vacant lot. A well-designed single-family home — consistent with every other structure on this street — would be a welcome addition to the neighborhood. What I am opposed to is a rezoning that allows a density and building configuration that is incompatible with the existing community and infrastructure. I respectfully request that the Commission deny this rezoning application, or at minimum require substantial modifications to reduce building mass, ensure adequate setbacks from adjacent properties, and provide off-street parking sufficient for all proposed units.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Respectfully,
Joseph Orton
1217 N 29th St
Phone - (503) 400 2267

Comments Regarding ORDINANCE No. 2026-073

From ekeely <eekeely11@gmail.com>

Date Tue 4/7/2026 10:36 AM

To Trump, Shaianna L. - PDR <Shaianna.Trump2@rva.gov>

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Good morning,

My name is Libby Keely and I am a neighbor of 1215 N 29th St. I have some concerns about the detrimental affects of granting this special use permit in our neighborhood.

I wanted to share my thoughts regarding the matter:

First of all, I disagree with the statement that "*this ordinance will not (i) be detrimental to the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community involved, (ii) tend to create congestion in streets, roads, alleys and other public ways and places in the area involved, (iii) create hazards from fire, panic or other dangers, (iv) tend to overcrowding of land and cause an undue concentration of population, (v) adversely affect or interfere with public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, water supplies, sewage disposal, transportation or other public requirements, conveniences and improvements, or (vi) interfere with adequate light and air*". My main concern here is the claim that this ordinance will not create additional congestion in the street and alley. The alley directly leading to my home will be used by an additional 3+ individuals, and this alleyway is already a tight squeeze. Street parking is also already limited in this area. We do not want additional congestion, overcrowding, noise pollution, and traffic.

Additionally, I find irony in the statement found on page 12 that this would "*Develop inclusionary and equitable housing options for our gentrifying neighborhoods to prevent involuntary displacement.*" The Church Hill neighborhood has already become increasingly gentrified, and it's blatantly false that a new, unaffordable, duplex would somehow prevent further gentrification. A perfect example of such gentrification in our area is the new "Chimbo Sandwich Shoppe," which sells sandwiches for the hefty price of \$26-38 each. Even as someone who makes a somewhat living wage, these prices are absolutely egregious, and largely prohibitive for the original population of Church Hill and Church Hill North. I can only imagine this proposed duplex will be rented at market price, which now and especially in the city of Richmond, is exorbitant for anyone who isn't earning an upper class wage.

I have more thoughts on this matter but will leave it at this for now. I hope the opinions of community members will be considered in this matter. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Libby

From: [John Valliere](#)
To: [Brown, Jonathan W. - PDR](#)
Cc: [City Clerk's Office](#); [Vonck, Kevin J. - PDR](#); [PDR - Planning](#)
Subject: Public Comment – SUP 1215 N 29th St (Ord. 2026-073)
Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 6:17:43 PM

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Please find the below comments and questions regarding the request for a SUP 1215 N 29th St (Ord. 2026-073).

We are not opposed to development on this lot. A single-family home or similarly scaled duplex would be consistent with the block. Our concern is that this proposal effectively creates a three-unit development, and the ordinance does not adequately demonstrate that this level of intensity meets the required findings.

- 1. The applicant and staff report acknowledge this proposal results in 30 units per acre. For the purposes of evaluating neighborhood impact, is the City treating this as a standard two-unit duplex, or is it acknowledging the functional reality of a three-unit multi-family development on a single 0.10-acre lot?**
- 2. The ordinance concludes this will not create 'undue concentration of population'. What specific block-level analysis was conducted to compare this 30-unit-per-acre intensity to the actual existing density of the immediate adjacent R-6 parcels?**
- 3. With three independent dwelling units totaling seven bedrooms, what is the City's expected parking demand? Given that only one garage is proposed in the accessory building, how does the City justify the finding that this will not 'tend to create congestion' on North 29th Street?**
- 4. The ordinance relies heavily on the phrase 'substantially as shown' regarding the TrinityHDC plans. What is the quantifiable 'margin of error' for a deviation under this legal standard, and what specific enforcement mechanism exists to ensure the interior of these 1,100-square-foot flats aren't further subdivided after the Certificate of Occupancy is issued?**
- 5. Section 4(b) states that the owner must maintain facilities so as not to 'adversely affect or damage any other property' with surface water. Given the significantly increased building coverage on this currently vacant lot and that adjacent property owners have already had to mitigate roof runoff and moderate to poorly drained soil with a high clay content, has a site-specific drainage impact study been evaluated**

prior to this approval, or is the Council delegating that finding to a later administrative process?

6. The applicant claims this SUP provides 'quality assurances' and 'benefits' that a by-right development would not. Aside from the specific building materials mentioned , what enforceable, long-term standards are being coded into this ordinance that would not already be required by the standard building code for a single-family home or a standard duplex?

We support the development of this vacant lot. However, the burden of proof is on the applicant to show why a standard single-family home or a code-compliant duplex is insufficient. This request asks for a level of intensity that exceeds the R-6 zoning protections, and we ask the Council to require a proposal that meets the neighborhood's scale without requiring such significant exceptions.

Regards,

John Valliere
1201 29th St. N.

Public Comment – Ordinance No. 2026-073 (1215 N. 29th Street)

From Parker Alexandra Winston <alexwinston@berkeley.edu>

Date Thu 4/16/2026 5:10 PM

To Trump, Shaianna L. - PDR <Shaianna.Trump2@rva.gov>

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Good afternoon,

I am writing to submit a public comment on Ordinance No. 2026-072 for 1215 N 29th St, Richmond, VA 23223. I live at 1211 N 29th St, Richmond, VA 23223, one house away from the property in question, and would be directly impacted by this proposal.

I have the following concerns:

- **Incompatibility with existing neighborhood pattern:** The proposal allows a 2-family dwelling and 1 additional unit in an accessory building. This would place 3 households on one lot, which is not consistent with the surrounding area that is predominantly single-family homes.
- **Insufficient off-street parking and displacement of existing parking:** The property does not have sufficient off-street parking to support 3 units. In this area, residents already rely on existing off-street parking arrangements, and introducing 3 units in place of 1 unit will displace current residents' parking.
- **Existing parking constraints:** On-street parking along the front roadway is already limited and frequently near capacity. There are routinely no available parking spaces during evening hours and demand from additional units will worsen this condition.
- **Constrained site access:** Access to the property via the rear alley is narrow and already functioning at capacity. Increased use from additional units will create conflicts for vehicle movement and safety.
- **Cumulative impact and precedent:** Approval of this special use permit may encourage similar requests in the area, leading to incremental increases in density without corresponding infrastructure capacity, ultimately altering the character and functionality of the neighborhood.

I respectfully request that the Planning Commission and City Council carefully consider whether this proposal is appropriate for this location. Please include this correspondence in the public record. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Alex Winston