



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-061: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 1300 North 34th Street and 1302 North 34th Street for the purpose of up to two two-family detached dwellings, two single-family attached dwellings, and a single-family detached dwelling with garages for rent, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: April 7, 2026

PETITIONER

Mark Baker - Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

1300 North 34th Street and 1302 North 34th Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize two two-family detached dwellings, two single-family attached dwellings, and a single-family detached dwelling with garages for rent, which use, among other things, is not currently allowed by sections 30-410.1, permitted principal uses, and 30-410.2, permitted accessory uses and structures, of the Code of the City of Richmond. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed uses align with the Master Plan recommendations for Neighborhood Mixed Use and are considered Primary Uses. While functioning as two duplexes, garages, and an above garage unit, the applicant has employed creative detail to ensure that the units and garage appear, from the public realm, as single-family dwellings. The massing, height, and architectural typology of the new buildings also match with surrounding, historic patterns of housing.

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.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The properties are located in the Church Hill North neighborhood on S Street between North 34th and 33rd Streets. The properties are currently a combined 8,121 sq. ft. (.18 acre) parcels of land, improved with two, single-family attached dwellings, constructed, according to City records, in 1950.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use is two, two-family detached dwellings, two single-family attached dwellings, and a single-family detached dwelling with garages. The proposed density of the parcel is 7 units upon .18 acres, or 39 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed Use, which is defined as "Existing or new highly walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses."

Development Style: These areas feature a variety of building types that are close to one another and create a unified street wall. The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas vary depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Setbacks, plazas, and parks create a sense of place and community gathering areas. New developments on larger parcels continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity within the neighborhood and to adjacent neighborhoods. In historic neighborhoods, small-scale commercial uses exist today or should be allowed to reestablish. In new neighborhoods, small scale commercial buildings should be introduced.

Ground Floor: Regardless of use, buildings should engage the street with features such as street-oriented façades with windows and door openings along street frontages. Appropriate setbacks, open space, front porches, elevated ground floors, and other features that provide a sense of privacy should be provided for residential uses.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveways are prohibited on Priority and Principal Street frontages. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys wherever possible. Parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.

Intensity: Building heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets. Parcels are generally between 1,500 and 5,000 sq. ft.

Primary Uses: Single family houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), and open space.

Secondary Uses: Large multifamily buildings (10+ units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government. (p. 56)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-5 Single-Family Residential. The proposed uses do not meet the following sections in the City's code:

Sec. 30-410.1. Permitted principal uses.
Single-family attached dwellings are not a permitted use.

Sec. 30-410.2. Permitted accessory uses and structures.
The rental of garages for vehicle storage to individuals not associated with the property is not permitted within the R-5 zone.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to two two-family detached dwellings, two single-family attached dwellings, and a single-family detached dwelling with garages for rent, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed the height as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any adjacent public right-of-way.
- Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the Special Use, the establishment of up to five residential lots and seven private easements, 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.
- 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 substantially as shown on the Plans, including without limitation the installation of seven street trees along S Street, and one street tree along North 34th Street, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works.

Surrounding Area

All adjacent and nearby properties are located within the same R-5 zone. The area is primarily single family residential, with some two-family residential, small multi-family, and institutional uses present in the vicinity.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and the Church Hill Central Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, staff has not received any letters of support or opposition for this application.

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