



# CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2024-036:** To authorize the special use of the properties known as 2900 Rady Street and 2733 5th Avenue for the purpose of up to 83 permanent supportive housing units, upon certain terms and conditions. (6th District)

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** February 20, 2024

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### **PETITIONER**

Virginia Supportive Housing (represented by Williams Mullen)

### **LOCATION**

2900 Rady Street and 2733 5th Avenue

### **PURPOSE**

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for the properties known as 2900 Rady Street and 2733 5th Avenue for the purpose of up to 83 permanent supportive housing units. The subject properties are part of an I Institutional District that contains the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) north campus and a special needs school on the opposite side of Rady Street. The applicant is under agreement to acquire the properties from RBHA and construct up to 83 units of permanent supportive housing with accompanying services. The proposed permanent supportive housing facilities use does not meet certain feature requirements of the I Institutional District; therefore, the applicant requests a Special Use Permit.



Figure 1: Surrounding Zoning Districts (subject properties outlined in red)

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff has reviewed the application and finds the proposal is generally consistent with the future land use recommendations. The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Residential which supports small multi-family buildings as a secondary use when located along major streets; the portion of Rady Street fronting the property is identified as a Major Residential Street. Major Residential Streets carry high volumes of vehicles,

pedestrians, and bicycles through residential neighborhoods and prioritize creating sidewalks, crosswalks and installing street trees as a buffer between the sidewalk and street.

While the Residential future land use designation recommends buildings up to 3 stories, the site is in the Six Points Neighborhood Node that envisions denser residential development describing, “future development should be between 2 and 4 stories and be sensitive to the surrounding residential neighborhood which exists in close proximity.” (Richmond 300 p. C-23).

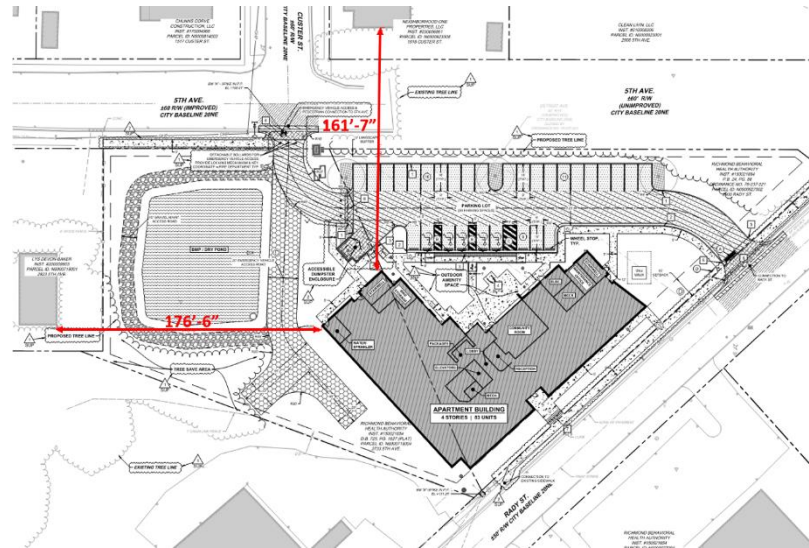


Figure 2: Site Plan Layout Showing Distance to Nearest Residential Uses

Staff has reviewed the applicant’s plan for a four-story multifamily structure and finds that the proposed structure is generally consistent with the scale of two- and three-story institutional use buildings located to the east and the density recently approved on the adjacent property, 2906 5th Avenue, which authorized 52 units (Ordinance No. 2022-227). Staff finds that the proposed structure is located approximately 161 feet from the nearest residential structure to the northwest and 176 feet from the adjacent residential structure to the southwest and that the massing of a proposed building will not interfere with surrounding properties’ access to adequate light and air.

The plan proposes a building oriented towards Rady Street. Primary access to the site occurs from Rady Street and the secondary driveway connection to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is proposed for emergency vehicle access only. The second driveway provides pedestrians access through the site, connecting the new sidewalk proposed along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Rady Street. Staff finds that the proposed layout is configured to be sensitive to the surrounding residential neighborhood by orienting the building towards Rady Street and preventing vehicles from circulating through the site into the residential neighborhood. Additionally, staff finds that the tree save area identified on the applicants’ plans will help to buffer the development from the surrounding residential context.

Staff finds that the proposal contributes to Objective 14.2 to “Ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and one time,” and the strategy to “create a minimum of 300 units of permanent supportive housing to house persons with special needs by 2024 in partnership with Virginia Supportive Housing and other local housing organizations.” The applicant, Virginia Supportive Housing, proposes 83 permanent supportive housing units which would contribute to fulfilling approximately 27 percent of the 300-unit target. The applicant elaborates that, “the RBHA’s willingness to transfer the parcels for this project reflects increasing public recognition that housing, when paired with critical social services, can help serve the needs of some of our community’s most vulnerable residents so that homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time” (Attachment 2).

The Six Points node recommends, “in the future, this area can be a more enlivened community center with more neighborhood services and residential uses, better connectivity to and around the area, and more placemaking and public art amenities that focus on the history and cultural

assets of the area.” (Richmond 300 p. C-23). Staff finds that the permanent supportive housing and accompanying services are consistent with the density, neighborhood services and residential uses envisioned in this neighborhood node.

Staff finds that the proposal contributes to Objective 6.1 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.” (Richmond 300, p. 109). The site is in the Six Points neighborhood node and is located approximately 350 feet from a GRTC Transit stop at the corner of Brookland Park Boulevard and Fourth Avenue.

Staff finds that, with the ordinance conditions, the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, are met by the proposal. Staff finds that the proposed use would not be detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved, would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved, and would not create hazards, overcrowding of land, or interfere with public requirements and adequate light and air.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description and Surrounding Area**

The properties are in the Highland Park Southern Tip neighborhood situated between Rady Street and 5th Avenue. The properties are currently vacant totaling 75,014.35 (1.722 acres). The property is located in an I-Institutional District, which is surrounded by zones including: M-1 to the south, R-6 to the west, M-2, I, and R-6 to the east, and U-B and R-6 to the north. The density of the proposed application is 83 dwelling units upon 1.7 acres or 48.20 units per acre.

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

Permanent Supportive Housing containing up to 83 units.

### **Master Plan**

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates future land use for the subject properties as Residential. A Residential designation describes, “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.

Ground Floor: Not applicable. 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 up to 5,000 to 20,000+ sq. ft. 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 (typically 3-10 units), institutional, and cultural. Secondary uses may be found along major streets” (p. 54)

The site is located off a portion of Rady Street, which is identified as a Major Residential Street. 2900 Rady Street is located in the Six Points Neighborhood Node, which envisions enlivening the area as a community center with more neighborhood services and residential uses, better connectivity to and around the area, and more placemaking and public art amenities that focus on the history and cultural assets of the area. The Six Points Node recommends future development between 2 and 4 stories and be sensitive to the surrounding residential neighborhood which exists in close proximity.

### **Zoning**

The property is zoned I (Institutional District). The proposed permanent supportive housing use does not meet certain feature requirements, including side yard setbacks and height; therefore, a Special Use Permit is required to be adopted by City Council to permit the use.

### **Ordinance Conditions**

If adopted, the Special Use Permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to 83 permanent supportive housing units, substantially as shown on the Plans. Amenity spaces, including a ground-level outdoor amenity space labeled “Outdoor Amenity Space,” and ground-level indoor amenity space labeled “Community Room” and “Bike Storage,” substantially as shown on the Plans, shall be provided. All other uses permitted in the I Institutional District, pursuant to section 30-432.1 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, shall also be permitted.
- No more than 30 off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No fewer than four short-term bicycle spaces shall be provided on the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed four stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- Signs on the Property shall be limited to signs permitted in all districts pursuant to section 30-505 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, signs permitted in the I Institutional District, pursuant to section 30-511 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended. Internally illuminated signs and roof-mounted signs shall not be permitted.
- All building elevations and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans. Brick, brick veneer, stone, stone veneer, masonry, vinyl, fiber cement, and engineered wood shall be permitted building siding materials. Vinyl siding shall have a minimum wall thickness of 0.044 inches, as evidenced by the manufacturer’s printed literature.
- All mechanical equipment, including, but not limited to, transformers, serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- Subject to provisions of Chapter 30, Article VI, Division 15 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, all required supplemental materials that pertain to the permanent supportive housing use shall be submitted at the time of application for a certificate of zoning compliance.

- Ornamental vegetation shall be installed between the face of the building and the Rady Street public right-of-way frontage, which vegetation shall be comprised of a total of five trees not less than 2.5" in caliper. The final location of the forgoing ornamental vegetation shall be coordinated with the City's urban forestry reviewer and shown on a final landscape plan prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
- 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.

### **Neighborhood Participation**

Staff notified area residents and property owners, as well as the North Highland Park Civic Association. Staff has not received written public comments.

### **Staff Contact**

James Dealaman, Planner Associate, Land Use Administration, 804-646-0455

### **Attachments**

1. Application Coversheet
2. Applicant's Report
3. Survey
4. Plans