



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2025-271 To authorize the special use of the property known as 1920 Fairmount Avenue for the purpose of office and social service delivery uses, upon certain terms and conditions. (7th District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: January 6, 2026

PETITIONER

Lory Markham

LOCATION

1920 Fairmount Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to allow for office and social service delivery uses in a R-6 Single-Family Attached District. The uses are not permitted within the district. A Special Use Permit is therefore necessary to proceed with this request.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that subject property has a designated future land use of Neighborhood Mixed-Use. The proposed use is consistent with the suggested secondary uses in that designation.

Staff finds that the subject property is located less than a mile from Mosby Court and less than a mile from the 25th/Nine Mile Node. Chapter 2, Objective 1.3, focuses on how to support the growth of jobs and housing in Priority Neighborhoods and at Nodes. A key strategy is to cluster community serving facilities in these neighborhoods. Social service delivery uses are considered community serving.

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 recommends approval of the Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property is located in the Fairmount neighborhood on the corner of Fairmount Avenue and North 20th Street. The property is a 18,156 square foot (0.41 acre) parcel improved with an institutional building. The building is to remain.

Proposed Use of the Property

Social service delivery uses.

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.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-6 Single-Family Attached District. The following features of the proposed development do not comply with the current zoning regulations:

Section 30-412.1 – Permitted principal uses

Social service delivery is not a permitted use

This special use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as office and social service delivery uses, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The hours of operation for the Special Use shall be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.
- The Property shall not be used for (i) any dwelling use or (ii) a recovery residence, as defined by section 37.2-431.1 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.
- Signs on the Property shall be limited to signs permitted pursuant to section 30- 507.1 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.
- Prior to the issuance of a certificate of zoning compliance for any social service delivery use, the Owner shall submit the following information in writing to the Zoning Administrator, which shall include, at a minimum:
 - (1) The location and description of all access control points and any fencing and screening for the parcel and all buildings and structures;
 - (2) The location and description of the use and occupancy of each room or space inside all buildings and structures;
 - (3) The location and description of the size of emergency ingress points, egress points, and evacuation routes;
 - (4) The location and description of all smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, and fire extinguishers; and
 - (5) An operations information statement that shall include, at a minimum, the following:
 - (a) The name of the operating entity, its articles of incorporation or similar organizational document and its bylaws, if any, and a statement of the operating entity's experience providing social service delivery;
 - (b) The anticipated dates, days, and hours of operation; and
 - (c) A description of each staff position, the qualifications necessary for each position, and a statement of the anticipated number of staff serving in such positions.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding area is a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners. Staff has received no letters to date regarding the proposal.

Staff Contact:

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