



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2025-257: To authorize the special use of the property known as 813 Catherine Street for the purpose of a two-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions. (2nd District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: December 2, 2025

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

813 Catherine Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize the construction of a two-family detached dwelling. The proposed two-family dwelling is a permitted use in the R-8 Urban Residential district where the property is located. However, the lot area requirement is not met. Therefore, a special use permit is requested.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the subject property is designated as Neighborhood Mixed-Use on the Future Land Use Map in the Richmond 300 Master Plan. Two-family detached dwellings are a primary use.

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 property is located on the south side of Catherine Street in between Gilmer and Goshen Streets. The parcel is 32 feet wide and 94 feet in depth, for a total lot area of 3,007 square feet. Alley access is provided to the rear of the property. The now vacant property recently contained a dilapidated single-family dwelling.

Proposed Use of the Property

Two-family detached dwelling.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed-Use described 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 multi-family buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The property is in the R-8 (Urban Residential) zoning district. The proposed use of the property is to construct one two-family detached dwelling, which is a permitted principle use in the R-8 zoning district provided on a lot not less than 3,400 square feet. The lot area of 3,007 square feet is not met.

If approved, this special use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a two-family detached dwelling, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building elevations and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans. Vinyl siding shall not be permitted.
- 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 public right-of-way.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding area is primarily single-family and two-family residential.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Carver Area Civic Improvement League as well as area residents and property owners. A sign was posted on the property. The Carver Area Civic Improvement League is supportive of this proposal.

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