



## CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2020-176** - To authorize the special use of the property known as 311 West Franklin Street for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 128 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** September 8, 2020

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#### **PETITIONER**

Lory Markham – Markham Planning

#### **LOCATION**

311 West Franklin Street

#### **PURPOSE**

To authorize the special use of the property known as 311 West Franklin Street for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 128 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The subject property consists of a 15,571 SF or .36 acre parcel of land improved with a 128 unit multi-family building constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1964. The property is located in the Monroe Ward neighborhood within the City's Downtown Planning District along West Franklin Street between North Monroe and North Madison Streets. The property is also located within the Arts District Station area of the City's Bus Rapid Transit (Pulse) Corridor.

The applicant is requesting a special use permit ordinance in order to modify the parking requirements for the multi-family dwelling to 29 parking spaces. The property is currently served by 99 off-street parking spaces, 29 of which are located on the subject property. The remaining 70 spaces are located in a surface parking area at 321 West Grace Street.

Staff finds that the property is within the Arts District Station Area of the City's Pulse Corridor Plan and that the proposed amendment is aligned with the Plan's future land use category of Downtown Mixed-Use wherein surface parking is prohibited as a principle use and parking requirements are substantially less or eliminated.

Staff finds that the proposed amendment would enable the existing surface parking area at 321 West Grace Street to be available for redevelopment consistent with the Pulse Corridor Plan.

Staff finds that with the ordinance conditions the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, are met. Specifically, staff finds that the proposed amendment 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.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The subject property consists of a 15,571 SF or .36 acre parcel of land improved with a 128 unit multi-family building constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1964. The property is located in the Monroe Ward neighborhood within the City's Downtown Planning District along West Franklin Street between North Monroe and North Madison Streets. The property is also located within the Arts District Station area of the City's Bus Rapid Transit (Pulse) Corridor.

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

The applicant intends to maintain the property as a 128 unit multi-family building with 29 off-street parking spaces.

### **Master Plan**

The City of Richmond's current Pulse Corridor Plan designates the subject property as Downtown Mixed-Use which "...features high-density development with office buildings, apartments, and a mix of complementary uses, including regional destinations. Higher-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites; new development should be urban in form and may be of larger scale than existing context. Active commercial ground floor uses required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Active ground floor uses and design required on priority street frontages. Driveway entrances required to be off alleys whenever possible; new driveways prohibited on street-oriented commercial and priority street frontages. Little to no setback of new development unless to create pedestrian-oriented amenities like plazas and outdoor dining. Surface parking prohibited as a principal use; when surface parking is provided as an accessory use, it should be located to the rear of buildings and screened by shade trees. Parking requirements are substantially less in these areas than other areas of the city and are largely eliminated. Potential future zoning districts: B-4, RF-2 (City of Richmond, 2017)

Specifically for the Arts District Station Area, the Pulse Corridor Plan states "The Downtown Mixed-Uses along W. Broad Street and throughout Monroe Ward encourage the redevelopment of surface parking lots and underutilized buildings into high-density buildings that focus on creating walkable environments with active ground floors, appropriate streetscape, and minimal driveway entrances. The future land use for Monroe Ward builds on the incredibly dynamic and diverse existing building stock, creating a truly eclectic urban neighborhood."

### **Zoning and Ordinance Conditions**

The current zoning designation for this property is RO-3 (Residential Office District). The City's Zoning Administration reviewed the application and provided the following comments:

Under the proposal, the off-street parking requirement will not be met. For the 128 units within the building, 99 parking spaces have been provided (some of the required spaces are nonconforming ("grandfathered")). Only 29 spaces are proposed, which does not meet the off-street parking requirement of the RO-3 district (Sec. 30-710.1(a)(4)a).

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Within the B-4 Zoning District, which is an appropriate district according to the Pulse Corridor Plan, 1 parking space per 4 dwelling units would be required. This equates to approximately 32 parking spaces.

The following conditions have been attached to this ordinance:

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily dwelling containing up to 128 dwelling units, with 29 off-street parking spaces, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

### **Surrounding Area**

Adjacent properties along West Franklin Street are in the same RO-3 district. Adjacent properties to the south are in the TOD-1 District. A mix of office, commercial, institutional, mixed use, and multi-family residential land uses are present in the vicinity.

### **Neighborhood Participation**

The City's Land Use Administration has notified the Downtown Neighborhood Association, and area residents and property owners regarding this application. Staff has not received correspondence regarding this application.

**Staff Contact:** Jonathan Brown, PDR, Land Use Administration 804-646-5734