



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021-278: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 6900 Patterson Avenue and 6904 Patterson Avenue for the purpose of (i) up to seven single-family attached dwellings; (ii) either one single family detached dwelling or offices, including business, professional and administrative offices, medical and dental offices and clinics, and studios of writers, designers and artists engaged in the graphic arts; and (iii) one common area, upon certain terms and conditions. (1st District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: November 1, 2021

PETITIONER

Lory Markham – Markham Planning

LOCATION

6900 Patterson Avenue and 6904 Patterson Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the properties known as 6900 Patterson Avenue and 6904 Patterson Avenue for the purpose of (i) up to seven single-family attached dwellings; (ii) either one single family detached dwelling or offices, including business, professional and administrative offices, medical and dental offices and clinics, and studios of writers, designers and artists engaged in the graphic arts; and (iii) one common area, upon certain terms and conditions. (1st District)

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is to authorize single-family attached dwellings and possible office use within an R-4 Single-Family Residential District. The proposed uses are not permitted uses within the R-4 district. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan pertaining to the Community Mixed-Use Category and The Village node. The use, density, site design, height, and complementary nature of its architecture, all align well with the aforementioned Master Plan recommendations.

Staff finds that the proposed height of the special use is consistent with the height permitted in the underlying R-4 District and that the architecture and building materials are consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

Staff further finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the planned addition of five on-street parking spaces, as well as, nine off-street parking spaces. The plan also calls for visitor bicycle parking. Mass transit options are also available.

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 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 properties are located in the Three Chopt neighborhood at the corner of Patterson Avenue and Charles Street. The properties are currently a 9,132 sq. ft (.21 acre) and a 12,009 sq. ft. (.27 acre) parcel of land, with a 2,042 sq. ft. single-family detached dwelling (currently used as an office) constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1947.

Proposed Use of the Property

The application calls for seven single-family attached dwellings, common area, and retention of the existing building for either office use or single-family residential use. Off-street vehicular and bicycle parking is also proposed.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Community Mixed-Use. This designation is defined as a "Cluster of medium-density, walkable commercial and residential uses that provide neighborhood services to nearby residential communities and sometimes feature regional attractions." The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary significantly depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Uses may be mixed horizontally in several buildings on a block or vertically within the same building. Developments continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Ground floor uses engage with, and enliven, the street. Monolithic walls are discouraged, while windows, doors, storefronts, and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street are encouraged. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be of alleys whenever possible; new driveways are prohibited on priority and principal streets. Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening; shared parking requirements are encouraged.

Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to six stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas, as necessary. New buildings that are taller than historical buildings should step back from the build to line after matching the height of the predominant cornice line of the block.

Primary Uses: Retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Single-family houses, institutional, and government. (p. 58)

The properties are located within “The Village” Neighborhood Node. Neighborhood Nodes are “...local crossroads typically within or next to larger residential areas that offers goods and services to nearby residents, employees, and visitors.” (p. C-1)

The Master Plan offers the following specific information for The Village node:

Vision: The Village is currently a suburban strip commercial district with many retail and office destinations; however in the future, to support a more walkable, bikeable, and transit-ready environment, new developments at the Village adopt a traditional “village center” feel with buildings at least 2-to-3 stories tall, located closer to the street and with parking lots behind the buildings, and pedestrian and bike infrastructure. New development should consider the addition of some residential units. The Community Mixed-Use future land use designation at The Village allows for medium-scale mixed-use development, which is in harmony with the surrounding residential neighborhoods and supports high-frequency transit.

Growth Potential: Low – since most of the land at this Node is in Henrico County, there is not much development opportunity within the City.

Primary Next Steps:

Since the majority of The Village is in Henrico County, all planning should occur in close collaboration with Henrico:

- Rezone The Village to allow for residential uses and increase height maximums (current B-2 prohibits buildings taller than 35 feet) (see Goal 1 and Goal 14)
- Implement design standards to create a high-quality and well-designed neighborhood Node and explore the creation of signature public art at this gateway (see Goal 4)
- Improve pedestrian and bike infrastructure through The Village and specifically from The Village to Bandy Park (see Goal 4, Goal 8, and Goal 17)
- Implement high-frequency transit along Patterson Avenue with a transit stop at Patterson Avenue and Three Chopt Road (see Goal 8)

The properties are also located on a designated Major Mixed-Use Street which:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, through commercial and mixed-use areas
- Prioritize use and density-scaled sidewalks and crosswalks
- Require form elements, such as buildings to the street with parking in the rear, as well as building windows and entrances on the street
- Incorporate streetscape features, such as trees, benches, and trash receptacles
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Prioritize the curbside for walking, bicycling, transit, and short-term parking access and loading for local shops and restaurants (p. 74)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-4 Single Family Residential. The City of Richmond Zoning Administration has reviewed plans. The application does not meet the following zoning requirements:

Sec. 30-408.1. Permitted principal uses.

Any principal use in the R-1 district as set forth in section 30-402.1 shall be permitted in the R-4 single-family residential district.

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This special use permit is conditioned on the following special terms and conditions:

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as (i) up to seven single-family attached dwellings; (ii) either one single family detached dwelling or offices, including business, professional and administrative offices, medical and dental offices and clinics, and studios of writers, designers and artists engaged in the graphic arts; and (iii) one common area, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) Nine off-street parking spaces shall be provided on the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(c) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(d) All elevations, building materials, and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

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

(f) In addition to the signs permitted by the underlying zoning regulations, signs permitted by section 30-507.1 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, shall be permitted on the Property.

(g) Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the Special Use, the subdivision of up to eight residential lots, and one commonly owned lot, 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.

4(c) 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.

(e) The Owner shall make improvements within the public right-of-way, including new street tree along Charles Street, new sidewalk along Charles Street, a new drive entrance to Charles Street, and five new on-street parking spaces along Charles Street, substantially as shown on the Plans, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works.

Surrounding Area

Surrounding properties within the city are in the same R-4 Residential District as the subject property. Properties to the east, within Henrico County, are in the R-3 Residential District. A mix of office, commercial, and institutional and residential uses are found along the Patterson Avenue corridor. Single-family residential land use predominates east of the corridor.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$68,529 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$20,559 per year, or \$1,713 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden.* Based upon the affordability threshold, the median household income for the Richmond region, and the estimated price of the fee simple units provided by the applicant, the seven single-family housing units are projected to be affordable to households making 94% of, or just below, the Area Median Income (AMI).**

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)*

*** (Based upon VHDA fixed-rate, 30-year mortgage, with 20% down and 4% interest)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Westhampton Citizen's Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. As of this date, staff has received letters of opposition for this application from adjacent property owners who reside in Henrico County. A petition of opposition was received in 2020, prior to subsequent revisions to the plans.

Staff Contact: Jonathan Brown, Senior Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5734