



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-029: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 100 North Thompson Street, 102 North Thompson Street, 104 North Thompson Street, 106 North Thompson Street, 101 Berrington Court, 103 Berrington Court, 107 Berrington Court, 109 Berrington Court, 3600 Floyd Avenue, and 3602 Floyd Avenue for the purpose of 17 single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 3, 2026

PETITIONER

Mark Baker - Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

100 North Thompson Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize 17 single-family attached dwellings within an RO-2 Residential Office District. The proposed single-family use is permitted by the underlying RO-2 zoning district but some of the underlying lot requirements are not met, including lot width, yards, lot coverage, and height. A Special Use Permit is therefore required to authorize this request.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed use aligns with the Master Plan recommendations for Community Mixed Use land uses, which lists single-family dwellings as a secondary Use.

Staff also finds that the seventeen contiguous units support Master Plan Objective 4.1, well-designed neighborhoods. The scale and orientation of the new units aligns well with the existing neighborhood, as well as the new multifamily community to the north and the single-family units to the east. The applicant has provided an architectural typology, scale, and massing that mimic many of the historic, physical characteristics found throughout the Museum District.

Staff further finds that the proposed is within the Carytown Regional/National Node and aligns with the goals of increasing height maximums, improving streetscapes, and "preserving the existing historic fabric". The proposed increases building heights, improves sidewalks and crosswalks, and borrows from Museum District architecture.

Staff finds that the proposed units are located on a designated Major Mixed-Use Street and contains, through design, an improved pedestrian experience, buildings that address the street with parking in the rear, new street trees, and rear entrances for vehicles; all of which are proposed features for creating Major Mixed-Use Streets.

Staff finds that the proposed supports Objective 1.3d, to Increase the number of transportation options viable at each Node and Priority Neighborhood by utilizing a Complete Streets approach

to allocating space in the right-of-way. The location of the new homes is within walking distance to the GRTC - 5 high frequency bus route.

Staff finds that the proposed supports Objectives 4.1c, 4.1n, and 4.1o. The proposed supports the creation of high-quality neighborhoods, including cases when the development encompasses most of a city block. This objective requires "...multiple buildings and/or façade articulation to increase visual interest, require massing that is responsive to the human-scale, and consider pedestrian through-block connections through existing super blocks to establish a street grid." New small-scale residential buildings on blocks should not have driveways and should focus on increasing "...building permeability by requiring new buildings to have functioning entrances from the sidewalk and restricting blank walls at ground level." The proposed development achieves each of these site-design elements.

Staff finds that the proposed supports Objective 4.4b to "Strengthen the streetscape connections by installing pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks, pathway, and trails where such infrastructure is missing." Staff recognizes that the existing intersection at Floyd Avenue and Thompson Street, partially due to its connection to the downtown expressway, has become one of the more hazardous intersections for pedestrians in the City. Staff has worked with the applicant to include proposed improvements to the intersection of Floyd Avenue and Thompson Street which will increase the walkability and safety of the intersection by adjusting crosswalks and adding curb extensions and wider sidewalks.

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 properties are located in the Museum District neighborhood on Thompson Street between Grove and Floyd Avenues. The properties are currently a collection of 10 contiguous parcels totaling 39,659 square feet (.9 acres), improved with six existing buildings, constructed in 1947, per tax assessment records.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use is 17 single-family attached dwellings. The proposed density of the parcel is 17 units upon .90 acres or 18 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Community Mixed Use, which 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."

Development Style: 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: 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.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be off 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 building 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.

Regional/National Node: A center with significant cultural, entertainment, government, and business destinations as well as shopping, housing, and unique place-based attractions. (24)

Major Mixed-Use Street:

- 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

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is RO-2 Residential Office District. The following feature requirements of the RO-2 are not met:

Sec. 30-426.4. Lot area and width

In the RO-2 Residential-Office District, minimum lot areas and lot widths for single-family and two-family dwellings shall be as required in the R-7 district...

The R-7 district requires single-family attached dwellings to be located on lots not less than 2,200 square feet. Some of the proposed lots are approximately 1,700 sq. ft. in area.

Sec. 30-426.5. Yards.

There shall be a front yard with a depth of not less than 25 feet.

The proposed front yards range from 11 to 13 feet in depth.

Sec. 30-426.6:1: Lot coverage

Maximum lot coverage in the RO-2 Residential-Office District shall not exceed 60 percent of the area of the lot for uses other than multifamily dwellings, nursing homes and lodging houses.

A majority of the proposed lot coverages are 75 percent or above.

Sec. 30-426.8. Height.

No building or structure in the RO-2 Residential Office District shall exceed 35 feet in height.

The proposed height of the units is approximately 52 feet.

If approved, the special use permit would be subject to the following conditions:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as 17 single-family attached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed four stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building elevations and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the Special Use, the establishment of up to seventeen residential lots and easements for access and utilities, 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.
- The special use permit granted by this ordinance is expressly conditioned on the adoption of and compliance with an ordinance closing to public use and travel a portion of an alley in the block bounded by North Thompson Street, Floyd Avenue, Berrington Court, and Grove Avenue, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- 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.
- The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including the installation of a six-foot wide public sidewalk and a minimum of 17 street trees along Berrington Court, Floyd Avenue, and North Thompson 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

All adjacent properties are located within the same RO-2 zoning district, with R-48 Multifamily Residential and B-3 General Business Districts to the north and south, respectively. The area is primarily single family residential, with some multi-family residential, and commercial uses present in the vicinity.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and the Museum District Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, staff has not received any letters of support, nor opposition, for this application.

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