



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2025-050: To authorize the special use of the property known as 2527 Stuart Avenue for the purpose of a food and beverage service establishment, upon certain terms and conditions. (2nd District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: April 1, 2025

PETITIONER

Johannas Design Group

LOCATION

2527 Stuart Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize the expansion of a restaurant which is a permitted use in the B-1 Neighborhood Business District. In situations where the property abuts a residential district, a ten-foot setback is required. The R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District Special is adjacent to the east. The proposed covered patio space encroaches into this side yard setback. Therefore, a Special Use Permit is therefore requested.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that covering an existing outdoor patio area is consistent with the City's Master Plan future land use designation of 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. The restaurant is described as a secondary use (Richmond 300, p. 56). The area around 325 North Robinson Street is in a Neighborhood Mixed-Use zone and is a part of a Micro Node, which is a notable place within a neighborhood that generally provides goods and services to the immediate residents but may attract visitors.

Staff further finds several objectives of the Master Plan are met as well. They are:

Objective 1.3 - Support the growth of jobs and housing in Nodes and Priority Neighborhoods by using placemaking, clustering community-serving facilities at Nodes and Priority Neighborhoods, and prioritizing infrastructure projects that encourage multi-modal accessibility to and from Nodes and Priority Neighborhoods.

Objective 6.1 - Increase the number of residents and jobs at Nodes and along enhanced transit corridors in a land development pattern that prioritizes multimodal transportation options. This location has a 92 Walk Score with proximity to bus routes. The restaurant is within walking distance to the number 20 bus along Robinson, Number 77 bus on Grove, Number 5 on Main, and access

to the Science Museum stop on the BRT (Bus Rapid Transit).

Objective 11.3 - Increase the number and support the growth of small businesses, start-ups, and women-owned and minority-owned businesses.

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 in The Fan neighborhood on the southeast corner of Stuart Avenue and North Robinson Street. The 3,542 square foot parcel is improved with a 2,992 square foot mixed-use structure that shares a party wall with the adjacent residential structure.

Proposed Use of the Property

A food and beverage service establishment.

Master Plan

The Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject property for Neighborhood Mixed-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 current zoning for this property is B-1 Neighborhood Business District where the food and beverage establishment is a permitted use. Side yards are not required in this district except where a side yard abuts a property in an R or RO district. In these cases, a side yard of no less than ten feet in width shall be required. As the improvement on the subject property shares a party wall with a dwelling in the R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District, a special use permit is required to authorize elimination this requirement.

This special use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a food and beverage service establishment, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All elevations and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- 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 property to the west, across North Robinson Street, contains an office use on property zoned R-48 Multifamily Residential District. The remaining properties contain primarily residential uses.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, the Robinson Street Association, Fan Area Business Alliance, and the Fan District Association. Staff has received formal public comment regarding the proposal.

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